

The Art of Thawing a Heart

by the-meek

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Summary: Jack is a thief that can steal anything... maybe even the heart of Prince Hiccup. Hijack, Frostcup, Hiccup from HHTYD X Jack Frost from RoTG

1. Chapter 1

First things first, the disclaimer.

I own none of the characters and/or settings in either Rise of the Guardians or How to train Your Dragon. This is simply a work of fiction.

Second things Second, how to read (if it confuses someone).

If any of you have read my other piece, "Funny Name", then you will know how this works. I switch from Jack's point of view to Hiccup's each time there is a line. This will be true for all except for dreams and when I decide to suddenly enter another character's point of view. THERE IS A DREAM IN THIS CHAPTER. It is Jack's. Do not get confused and ask me in a review just because you didn't read this. I will label if a new person's point of view when they are added. This probably won't happen unless later on I feel like it should be added.

Third things third, my gratitude.

Thank you all for reading, following, and reviewing! It means a lot! Also, If you choose to follow or add me as a favorite author please PM me so I can give a personal thank you :)

* * *

><p>Chapter 1<p>

I would already be halfway across the small kingdom of Berk when the

knights from the neighboring country, Merk, could realize they had lost me. I was staying at a small inn and tavern while I still could. It was nice to take my time when it was given to me. But soon enough they'd let the knights of Berk know I had made it across the border and the chase would begin anew. The woman behind the bar was rather chunky and in her late forties, with crow's feet gracing her cheeks and wild, curly red hair that still retained the shine of its youth. Or maybe that was just the oil coating left from not washing it. I couldn't really tell. "Anythin' I can get for yah, love? Yah didn't come down for breakfast this mornin'â€¦ I would remember seein' yah." She said, tapping her head for emphasis. Managing to keep a sigh down, I gave her a small, fake smile of appreciation. "Yes, actually. I've got a bag up in my room. It would be nice to have some things to fill it with before I head out again. Think you could help?" I asked, not wanting to piss anyone off this early in the morning, even though that seemed to be my specialty.

She wiped off a few crumbs from the bar top and smiled knowingly. "You're on the run, aren't you boy?" My eyes widened in surprise at her insight. "Well, I guess I'm not doing a very good job of hiding it, then." I said, finding a new sort of respect for the woman who had been able to pick me out so quickly. She only shook her head. "No, it's not that. I just know the type's all. Get 'em a lot through here. Not very hard, really. You don't go tradin' at the market wearin' _that_ sorta thing." She gestured at my attire pointedly. I took a drink of the water she had brought me and leaned on the back of the tall stool chair I sat upon. I had hoped to look homely with my ratty cloak draped over my shoulders and too-short brown trousers tied up with twine. Guess I'd overdone it. Quite honestly, though, I liked the look. Better than green tights for sure. Those things ride up too much. Not very manly if you ask me, no matter what they say about mobility or whatever else have they.

"Oh well, then. I guess that makes the charade just that much easier. Gives you a better idea of what I'll need I suppose." I told her, bringing us back to the point. She left her towel on the bar top and left to bring me something to stuff my bag with. I sipped on my water again, intending to fully enjoy my leisure before I had to leave again. It was never a good idea to stay in one place for too long, no matter how safe you thought you were. I had learned that the hard way when I was ten, the year I had first started out on my own. The ten day long ride-run-and-hide it had taken to get to Berk was still taking its toll, and the rough mattress I slept on last night had felt heavenly. The good thing was that I'd had a horse for over half the trek, so my feet weren't blistered.

Summer was the best and simultaneously the worst season for these kinds of jobs. On one hand, food was easy to come by and shelter unneeded apart for rain, and on the other hand, the days were longer, hotter, and more humid than the rest of the year, so you had to stay close to the rivers, close to where the guards would be searching. At least it was better than freezing to death in the snow and ice. I blended in nicely with the snow, however, with my white hair and pale complexion that only burned, never tanned, (much to my misfortune). It was hard to think about snow for too long in the heat that seeped in through the wooden walls. Needless to say, it was going to be a long trip.

The woman re-appeared three minutes later with a small basket in her hands. "There yah go, love. That should last yah for a little while."

I rifled through its contents and found a handful of hard (but not stale) bread, a jar of fruit preserves, a sealed demijohn of water, some shelled nuts of all sorts, and five apples. Apples were good. Apples would last for some time, as would the preserves. I would save those for last, eating the bread first later that night, I decided. I handed her a few coins that I thought would suffice for the amount, since she hadn't stated a price. I could've easily taken it all and left, but I felt like I should pay when I had enough to, a philosophy none of my former comrades could understand. I thanked her and returned to my room with the basket of provisions in hand.

Inside my room, I transferred the goods from the basket to a small bag, which I then threw into a larger sack. I was tempted to take the blanket, but decided against it. It was too hot for the weather this time of year and too heavy to just carry around. Sure was comfy, though, and had I another bag, it would be gone. I slung my bag over my shoulder and exited the room. Walking downstairs, I waved good-bye to the mistress behind the bar and set out on my journey again. It was already hot. Very hot. If I thought I could get away with not burning in the sun I would've taken off my cloak, but if there was anything I hated more than being hot, it was having a sunburn, so it stayed put (much to my misfortune)(again).

The towns bordering the road kept getting larger and larger the closer you got to the kingdom's head, the castle city. The kingdom of Berk was currently being run by Stoick the Vast, a man known well throughout the world. He led with bravery and courage, and fought well in battle. His queen, Valhallarama, kept him in balance with her kindness and grace, even though it was said that she was equally as brave as her husband. Their son's name was Horrendous. A strange name for a prince, I thought, but then again, with a king named Stoick and a queen named Valhallerama, not much could be said. It wasn't as if he'd named himself. I carried my shoes in one hand, wanting to keep them functional for as long as I could. In the tall summer grass beside the path through a mountain meadow, I was reminded just how much I hated climbing uphill the further I went.

It was no wonder that Berk went to war as often as they did. I had never seen a richer, more plentiful country. It was a shame they lived as humbly as they did, but maybe that was why it was still so beautiful. When there was finally some tree cover, I took off my cloak. I knew this stretch of the road well. We had walked it before on our way to the neighboring country of Jerk, a nasty place I never wanted to return to. Too many rude hermits and businessmen that operated on their own benefit. Too bad for them that they didn't think sealed pockets were fashionable. I had made a killing in Jerk. I'd only go back if I was absolutely desperate, though. I didn't take a liking to being looked at as if I were scum by hermits. Tears down your self-esteem, it does.

Before sunset, I had reached the town nearest the castle. I would be able to hide as long as I kept my head down and didn't do anything overwhelmingly stupid.

Easy.

* * *

><p>I could see it in my head, at about that very moment a maid would be knocking at my chamber door with instructions to wake me up. She

would give an annoyed sigh after about the third try and would open the door gently to make sure I was awake. Then she'd give an exasperated grunt as she discovered that, yet again, her prince had gone missing. Sunlight was cresting over the mountainside as I sat in an old, tall pine to watch it paint colors across the sky. It was lovely, the best thing about mornings, my favorite time of day.<p>

My father, King Stoick, found it strange that his only son was a morning person when neither he nor my mother were. He thought a great deal of things about me were abnormal, actually. I whittled away at a piece of wood in my hands with a small knife. The fat stick was slowly turning into a delicate serpent in my practiced hands. North, my old fencing instructor, had taught me how to carve wood after our sessions in the lawn when we had a little time left. That was when I was nine, though, and as my nineteenth birthday drew ever closer, I knew I wouldn't be allowed nearly as much free time soon. I cherished my freedom while I still had some of it left, before I would be expected to start taking my place alongside my father in wars and such.

It was a strange sort of prison, privilege. I knew not what the real world was like, I had heard only stories from kinder mentors or knights who cared to share a word with me. The world outside the castle honestly sounded like a most terrible place. It seemed like everyone was always fighting in the streets or that there were wars going on everywhere and no one sounded happy in the slightest. So while I wanted to hear more about it, I never wished to be a part of it. That was clear enough to me. You see, I didn't possess the gift my mother or father possessed. There was not a single brave bone in my skeleton. I still shrieked at spiders for heaven's sake! How was I supposed to handle a bloody war?!

I laid the serpent down on a limb beside me and buried my face in my hands. My mother thought that keeping me in the castle for the entirety of my childhood would protect me from the corruption of the outside world, but she was wrong. Horribly wrong. Protect me? Instead it had made me a coward and a cumbersome one at that. I had none of my mother's famous grace for which she was known in the neighboring kingdoms. I was soft spoken and gawky, with limbs that never went the way I wanted them to and a voice that stuttered when I tried to be affirmative.

My only good point was my brain, really, and perhaps my kindness, even though that wasn't as up to par as I'd have liked it to be. I was good at chess, riding horses, and carving small figures out of wood. That was the extent of my talent apart from when you gave me a machine. Sometimes I hated how well-made everything in the castle was. There was never anything to sneak away to fix. Anytime I found a mantle clock ticking off time or a wheelbarrow who's wheel was soon to fall off, I would quietly mend it while no one was watching.

I peeled my hands away from my face and looked up to see that the sun had fully risen. Time to go. I swung my legs over the side of the tree to see if I could spot the small pack of maids that would be out hunting for me in the main lawn. Sure enough, they were there like a gaggle of geese across the courtyard. Looked like I'd be sneaking in today as well. Just as I was about to jump down from my perch, the castle doors opened to reveal some knights with a new prisoner in their midst.

The prisoner looked raggedy, with brown trousers tied up with twine and a cloak that had seen better days. His hair, though, was pristinely white, like the clouds that gathered above on a clear summer day. It sparkled slightly, with a natural sheen to it. Or perhaps that was oil from not bathing. I couldn't tell.

The prisoner made a nice distraction (much to my good fortune), and while the maids were all preoccupied with gossip over the man, I snuck down from the tree and into the garden. Aster, the main gardener, was already waiting for me. "Yah never learn, do yah, my prince?" He asked, a small smile on his face. He was a foreigner from a country I had never heard of in my studies, and spoke like I had never heard anyone speak before. I enjoyed his company more than almost anyone else's. He spoke to me like he would one of his mates or when addressing someone he was fond of. It made me feel whole. I was used to people treating me with indifference or being too careful to say almost anything around me my entire life. Apart from Aster, North, and Earl Sand, I had never really connected with anyone. But I was fine with being alone. I'd had a long time to get used to the silence. I'd learned long ago how to think.

Which made being social hard, by the way. I had attended balls and thrown balls and learned to dance at balls and so on and so forth, but they were never fun. I think they might have, had I been allowed to just sit in the corner and admire all of the gorgeous gowns and glass chandeliers that were only lit on special occasions. If anything, a ball was magnificently elegant. I wasn't a bad dancer, trained as I was from age five, but I wasn't a spectacular one either. At least I had never stepped on anyone's foot (much to my good fortune)(once more). Soon I would have to attend another for my long-awaited nineteenth birthday. A sort of coming-of-age. Not a month after my birthday, I would be sent on a brief tour of the kingdom and then shipped off to the warfront.

Responsibility for the kingdom was one gift I had hoped to avoid until I was at least twenty, but my father had other plans for me. I wasn't ready. It was as simple as that. Whist in front of my parents I made a good thespian, pretending to be brave, listing the accomplishments I hadn't actually accomplished in my fencing and fighting lessons. I was a wonderful liar. They had never once questioned me, mostly because they, too, wanted to believe it was true. Perhaps if I played the part for long enough, my role would become a reality. That was in the best case scenario, really, but there was always hope. "So, tryin' to make all the girls swoon in that handsome nightshirt yah got on there now are we?" Aster asked, taking note of my unchanged attire. "Bettah get in there soon or they'll all go into a fit. Yah'd think your breakfast was somethin' more important than the king's death by the way they react when you go missin'. Oh but umâ€¦ long live the king, though."

His little slip-up made me smile for some reason, and it was a good day. All the previous troubling thoughts were washed away, for which I was grateful. We said our good-mornings and I crept up the servant's staircase to my room. The maids had already hung out my robes for the day. By the look of them, it seemed like I would be doing something athletic. I mentally cringed. That meant my uncle, Duke Pitch, would be coming later that day. I groaned loudly and slipped the garments over my head. After dressing, I took a route less travelled to the dining room and waited for the maids to get

back in from their wild goose chase.

They walked in like waddling ducks all swarmed in a group, complaining loudly and being overall obnoxious creatures. I waited patiently for them to calm down enough to notice I was seated at the grand table, reading.

They all stopped dead in their tracks and cleared their throats when they had taken a breath for long enough to look up. They all smoothed their dresses and hair, stepping over quickly to my side. "Prince Horrendous! You weren't in your bed this morningâ€¦ again. That's the second time this week!" Elizabell exclaimed. "Third. It's the third time this week, Elizabell." Susalina corrected her. "Ohâ€¦ really? Hee hee! Silly me, I must've miscounted again. But back to my point. We were really worried! Where on Earth did you go?" Elizabell asked me, her frizzy blonde curls cascading down from her attempt at a bun. I sighed to myself, and put on a face I knew would save me from all their questioning. I slathered on the typical charming prince facade and stood up to face them. "Oh no! I've gone and done it again, haven't I? Ah, I hate when I do trouble you soâ€¦ it's just that the flowers smelled so lovely this morning as their scent filled my room from the garden below that, well, I just couldn't resist! I snuck out early to surprise my wonderful girls, who work so very hard to make me happy, with a small gift, a token of my affection."

I was laying it on thick, yes, but they wouldn't know the difference. I pulled a few flowers out of my coat pocket that Aster cut each morning for this very purpose. "The blossoms below reminded me so much of my own beautiful little flowers, my own private garden in the castle, my lovely maids. So I picked only the best for each of youâ€¦ I hope you are not too angry with me." I said, giving them an apologetic pout. It took all of the strength their slight forms could muster not to swoon. That would be enough. Elizabell, Isanna, Juiliara, and Susalina all grasped at their chests and squealed silently, overcome with emotion. Once they had all somewhat gotten ahold of themselves, they looked back at me. Juiliara was the first to speak, a head below all the others, her voice was high and soft. "Oh, I'll forgive you most definitely, our sweet prince!" she said, followed by Isanna's "Of course! How could I not!" Then came Susalina's usual, "Oh yes, yes, yes! Um, I mean no, no, no. I'm not mad, no!" and finally, Elizabell again. She seemed close to tears, a true romantic. "My! How beautiful! Of course I forgive you as wellâ€¦ justâ€¦ leave us a warning next time." She said, bushing heavily.

I pretended to heave a heavy sigh of relief. "Oh, I am so glad! Do you like them?"

I had asked as a formality, but once more I was bombarded with vigorous repetitions of "Yes!" and "Oh, of course!" Eventually they left to retrieve my breakfast, giggling excitedly and comparing their flowers. I could already tell it was going to be a long day.

* * *

><p>All right. Just because I jumped off a roof after being chased by a mad chicken on the loose does not mean I tried to steal said chicken. It wasn't labelled after all. I just thought it was free range. How was I supposed to know it was part of the king's flock? You'd think that would be closer to the castle at least. It didn't really matter what I thought, however. People didn't tend to listen

to the protests of prisoners. The dungeon was dark as night when compared to the brilliant courtyard they had dragged me through in order to get me down there. The entirety of the castle city had been like that, as clean and bright as sparkling brook. I had fancied staying hidden there for maybe one more day if not for that damn chicken.<p>

But instead, I now shared a cell with a man that had a long, jagged scar across his left eye. He was huge. No I mean really, he was monumental, this guy. He stood at least two feet taller than me (which was saying something) and had enough muscles to lift the whole castle. He took up about half of the small cell just by sitting down. Sleeping was another thing altogether. When he sprawled out across the floor for a nap, I would have approximately three square feet in which to curl myself upon the stone floor. His name was Putrid. A fitting title.

I was beginning to think that the whole odd-naming thing was just some strange tradition in Berk. This theory was confirmed when I learned that my jailor's name was Gobber. After a few days in the cell with Putrid's solemn silence, I had turned to him as he picked at his supper of gruel. "What you lookin' at, boy? Think I got a funny face or somethin'?" He had asked. I shook my head. "No, my good sir. I was admiring your hook actually. Reminds me of a friend I had once, only he kept hisâ€| _addition_ in this wonky crook shape that he never found the time to fix. Friend isn't the right word, thoughâ€| compatriot seems more appropriate. He was the one who helped me escape from my old country when the crusades were just beginning. I was still just a small thing then, just seven years of ageâ€| Strange how time passes so quickly."

Gobber looked at me like I had gone mad. I stared back, wanting to hold his attention. Any words would've been fine, even insults welcomed. At least it was some human conversation. Things got lonely in the darkness. You could still hear the howling and curses of real mad men and murderers echoing, yes, but that became nothing more than background music after one got used to it. Which was quickly, if you wanted to sleep (which I did). Gobber stared like that for a long time and then suddenly grinned. "Ah, What are yah, boy? The only reason anyone ever speaks to their jailor is to complainâ€| but instead here yah go tellin' me about some old _compatriot_ o' yours? You're a strange one, son, I'll give you that much."

The words were pleasant enough, so I would try to hold the conversation for as long as possible. It felt nice to work my underused vocal cords, having been silent for three days. Or at least, I thought it had been three days. After talking with Gobber for a good while longer, I learned that I had actually been in there for five days already and the only reason I couldn't tell was because my meals had been irregular. After a while, each day would pass exactly like its predecessor in the dirty place. I feared that I would grow ill before I even had the chance to ask for a pardon and thus my freedom. I talked with Gobber every time I got the chance. I told him of my travels across the world and how I had eventually wound up in the dungeon. He laughed when I recounted that bloody chicken. We became good friends before long, which was nice. I hadn't had much constant company in some years. When he would visit we'd talk of the matters of the world outside and such. Putrid usually took a nap during these talks.

By the time I had been in the dungeon for two weeks, and when I was sure it was safe to do so, I complained to Gobber for the first time. "There's not many things I miss, you know, about the world outside, but I can tell you this much; I should've enjoyed sunlight more. You don't realize how much of a joy it is until it's been taken from you."

Gobber frowned at me and plunged into a look of deep thought. He flicked his eyes at me after a few moments as he stood back up. "Wait here for a moment, lad. I'll be back in a minute." Wait? Well, what else was I going to do? I watched as he carefully ascended the stone steps, disappearing from sight. I leaned against the cold bars of the cell and attempted to get some rest while I waited.

I was back at the pond, a gorgeous silvery blue in the summer sun. My sister's slight form was beside me, wading at the water's edge. A strong sense of nostalgia washed over me, pulling up an ancient pain in my chest. Before long, she was tripping back towards me, beginning to cough.

* * *

<p>No!</p>

When she was fully out of the water, small red bumps began plaguing her pale skin.

Please no!

She started shivering as she collapsed into my arms. "Jackson! it really hurts!"

No! Stop it! I can't do this again!

Suddenly her shivering stopped and her eyes closed.

No! no! please! not again!.

* * *

><p>I woke up in a cold sweat, the familiar nightmare replaying in my head. I rubbed at my temple with two fingers as I stood to shake the visions out of my head. The worst thing about silence was that it forced you to think. I had managed to keep the dream at bay for two weeks. Why now? Why did I have to remember her right when I had found a small bit of hope? Fortunately, I didn't have much time to recount it. Before long, I could hear Gobber's voice combined with someone else's. "I promise yah, he's fine! He'll make one hell of a stable boy I tell yah! Weren't yah lookin' for one not too long ago?" I heard Gobber ask.</p>

A male voice answered in some strange accent not even I had heard before. "Oh come off it, man. You're getting' soft, that's what this is. Yah've nevah asked for the release of no prisonah before now! what's got you so worked up about this one?" The voice asked. A small bit of radiance shone at the entrance to the stairs and I could hear their footsteps as they drew nearer. I quickly swiped at my hair and face, trying to look at least half decent for the man that would probably determine my fate. When they came around the corner, there was Gobber, as usual, and a tall, lean man with short-cut gray hair

and tattoos up his arms. He was wearing an apron that looked more for gardening than cooking and an icy stare that struck you to the core.

By the saintsâ€¦| how was I going to get out of this one?

* * *

><p>So, first chapter!

_It feels great to be on a new story... *breathes in fresh mountain air* Now that I know what I'm doing I think this one will go a little bit smoother. I'm going to update every weekend (probably Saturdays, but Sundays if I'm running late) unless something happens like my recent hospital trip in the middle of FN. _

Thank you all for reading! A special shout out to HoneyBeez, thesamaritan, JMarieAllenPoe, sword slasher, kitty.0, shadow lunar heart, and Kigen Dawn for their kind reviews and patience from the very beginning of my first piece, they are really awesome :)

I promise you, I do have the end of Funny Name finished, but I am currently in the editing process. It will be out tomorrow.

Love to you all!

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2

I could hear the small tapping of feet down the hall as a maid came to wake me. "_By the virgin_â€¦|" I muttered under my breath. I didn't want to deal with any of them this morning, especially after another hefty fencing lesson with uncle Pitch. I had bruises all over from where the sabre had poked harshly into me. With a deep sigh I decided I would at least have some fun with it. As the footsteps grew closer, they became identifiable as Juiliara's, light and staccato. I flipped myself out of bed and walked over to the window. Throwing the curtains open, I stood in the bright morning light with my back to the door.

* * *

><p>(Juiliara's POV)<p>

I took a moment to smooth my dress and tidy my hair when I arrived at the prince's door. The prince had been sneaking out before sunrise more and more often, so it probably wouldn't matter what I looked like anywayâ€¦| but still. I knocked lightly at the hard, dark wood of the door and waited for a response. I looked around the wide hallway around me, taking in the magnificence of the castle. It really was a luxurious place to work in. I loved every part of it, even looking after the rascal liege. With no answer, I knocked once more, a little harder this time. I was sure it would be to no avail, but this was how things were done. You didn't give up on the prince unless you absolutely had to.

A few moments later, after hearing no indication that he was awake, I opened the door. "Prince Horrendous it's ti-!"

In front of me stood Prince Horrendous. He was illuminated by the light from the window that shone through his white nightshirt and there was something I knew none of the other girls had ever seen before. "U-um! I'm sorry, y-your highness! I thought you were still sleeping. I-I'll go fetch a change of clothes right away!" I fumbled, trying to find my reason. Prince Horrendous turned around, a small smile on his face. "Oh, good morning, Juiliana. I'm sorry I didn't hear you knock. Thank you."

My heart pounded in my chest. I bowed slightly and left the room quickly. Reaching a hand up to feel the blooming blush on my cheeks, I found them hot and red. With fast steps I rushed down to the kitchen to find all the other girls waiting anxiously for my news. I leaned against a wall, finally safe. The girls looked on with wonder and curiosity and I was soon buried under a tidal wave of questions. "What is it?" "Ooh! Something happened didn't it?!" "You're blushing!" "What did he do?!"

I walked over to the small wooden table in the middle of room and sat down, fanning myself lightly with one hand. "So I went to go wake the prince up as usual, knocking once, then twice. Then I walked in the room, thinking he wasn't going to be there oh but he was! You know that white nightshirt he's so fond of for the softness and how it's been worn down by so many washings? Well, he was standing up by the light of the window and as I walked in and it was just there!"

* * *

><p>I snickered quietly to myself as Juiliana's footsteps retreated back down the hallway. Well, that would keep them out of my hair for a little while at least. I threw on a simple brown and green tunic, one of my favorites, and some other clothes and headed out the door. Before long, I found myself outside, walking towards the stables. It was yet another beautiful summer morning, and the sun hadn't risen enough to reach its usual blistering temperature. Dew still lined the grass and soaked into my shoes as I heard distant whinnies protruding from the stables.<p>

I made my way over to Toothless, a sturdy black stallion I had recently taking a liking to. His eyes shined with excitement and bestial anticipation for a run. "Morning, bud." I greeted him, retrieving his saddle and lead. I secured them tightly around his middle and opened the gate to let him out. When we had made it into the open air, I swung myself atop him, patted his neck, and wrapped my hand around a bit of his hair (I wasn't too fond of reins, saddles were uncomfortable enough without something stuck in your mouth). I clicked my heels gently into his side, telling him it was okay to go.

He took off faster than a rabbit, making my hair fly backwards and my heart beat faster. It was the most incredible feeling, almost like flying on the ground. Toothless' stride was so smooth you could barely feel his gallop as we raced across the yard toward the gardens. There were still a few jumping hurdles set up from the last time I had taken Stormfly for a ride, so I led him over to them by gently tugging at his mane. When he saw them, he immediately picked up speed. Somehow that was still possible, even though the speed we had been going at before was faster than any other horse I'd ever

had. Coming to the first hurdle, he leaped over with grace and strode over to the next, jumping it with equal finesse.

We had almost gotten to a third hurdle when I heard a shout coming from the direction of the castle. I turned around to see Aster waving to me from the garden's side door. To my surprise, beside him stood the white-haired prisoner from a few weeks ago. Intrigued, I ran Toothless back over to where they stood. "Morning, Aster." I addressed him, giving a small nod. I wasn't sure if I should be guarded or not with the stranger at his side, but Aster wanted me to meet him, so he couldn't be all that bad. "Mornin', my prince. There's someone I'd like yah to meet." He said, stepping back to leave Jack in full view. "Prince Horrendous, this is Jack Frost, the new stable boy we've been lookin' for... Jack, this is the lone high prince of Berk, Prince Horrendous Haddock the third."

* * *

><p>When I'd imagined a prince Horrendous, this was the furthest thing from what I had in mind. He had a kind smile, and bright green eyes still widely open from his morning ride with a slight form that looked elegant and strong all at once. I bowed from the waist in respect, but he waved a hand at the gesture. "Thank youâ€¦ but please don'tâ€¦ It's a pleasure to meet you, Jack Frost. And tell meâ€¦ just how long has Aster been keeping you a secret? I thought the stables had been cleaner lately." He threw a playful glance at Aster, who shrugged. "Hide? I think of it more as givin' him time to train without his royal highness interfering."<p>

Prince Horrendous rolled his eyes, "'Come off it! Have you seen the girls? I'd be surprised if you had." He asked with a mischievous smirk. Aster raised an eyebrow to this, "No I haven'tâ€¦ and why exactly would you be surprised?" The prince just chuckled and avoided the question, "Doesn't matter. I'm sure you'll hear all about it later today anyway." Without another word, he rode off back towards the closest hurdle, jumping it swiftly and then heading back for the stables.

The prince had beenâ€¦ radiant. That was the best word I had to describe him. Aster laughed softly at my side, "That boy never learns." He said, shaking his head. "C'mon, Jack. You've got enough free time to come help me with those petunias in the shaded garden." He told me, and I followed with a sigh. It was nice to be able to work with my hands in the sun. It was something I'd never had the time to do before. Before the crusades, my father had been teaching to become a blacksmith like him, but that was over in a matter of weeks since we were forced to flee the country. The flowers had a nice smell and the air in the mountains was clear and fresh after the weeks of being trapped inside the dungeon. Though it had taken Bunnymund some time to warm up to me, he had eventually become kinder. "So, who are these 'girls' the prince was referring to earlier?" I asked.

Aster picked up a small trowel, digging into the soft Earth of a flower bed. "The prince's personal maids. There's four of them in total and they are the most scatter-brained and silly creatures the world has ever known." He said, blowing at some of the gray hair that fell onto his face. I stood astounded, "Four? Why on Earth would anyone need four personal maids?!" I asked. Aster shrugged, "It's not that much really. His father has eleven, and his mother, seventeen."

I blinked a few times, wondering how great it must be to have seventeen people cater to your every need. "Ok then, so why does he keep so few?" I asked, still curious. Aster nodded to himself in thought. "The princeâ€¦ he's modest. He doesn't really care to exploit his wealth since he feels he doesn't deserve it, which he does. Honestly, he'd make a bettah king than his hot-headed fathah, always dragging the bloody country to war. People see it as braveâ€¦ but it's foolish. I didn't say that, though, you hear me?" He said, giving me a warning look. I raised my dirt caked hands, "I won't say anything, thief's honor." I told him, and went back to my work.

The day in the garden passed quickly before me. I fell into bed and slept better than I had in years, to wake to another day much the same as the last. It was still before sunrise, but I walked into the small servant's kitchen where I grabbed a piece of bread and butter as breakfast and headed towards the stables for work. I heard someone inside, and assumed it was Aster fixing something. "Bunnymund? What are you doing up so early, you old goat?" I asked, turning the corner. Instead of finding Aster, though, I found the prince standing beside the stall housing the same horse he'd been riding yesterday, gently stroking its nose. "Oh! I'm sorry, your highness. I thought you were Mr. Bunnymundâ€¦" I apologized. The prince laughed lightly at my folly and beckoned me forward with a wave of his hand. "Good morningâ€¦ Jack, was it?" I nodded. "Yes, sire." I said, trying to keep formal. The prince looked saddened by the title though. "Ahâ€¦ that's very kind of you, but I prefer conversation without titles getting in the way. Please, call me Hiccup. It's a moniker of sorts, since I know my other name doesn't fit too well." He laughed a little, then continued, "Aster gave it to me years ago after a bout of Hiccups I'd had while learning to ride a horse, which had caused the horse to buck me off into the river. Ever since, he's never addressed me as Horrendous unless we were in the midst of company." He explained, laughing some more at the familiar memory.

I grinned as well, wondering how my previous perception of princes and royals in general had been so wrong. I used to think they were all just pompous pigs with more money than they knew how to spend yet still felt it wasn't enough. That was the way the king of my old country had been, drinking his subjects dry. That wasn't the case for princeâ€¦ Hiccup, however. It seemed almost as though he was ashamed of being a royal, something I couldn't really understand. I walked closer to the stall with the magnificent black stallion inside. "He's one of the finest of the team, fast as lightning." I told him, as if he didn't already know that.

Prince Hiccup nodded fervently. "Isn't he? Even though he isn't a show horse, he'll definitely make a good war horseâ€¦ if I could bring myself to use him, that is. I don't think I could, though. It would feel like condemning him to death." He said, lowering his face to the horse's. "I'm spoiled like that, I suppose. Once I get attached to animal I can't let it goâ€¦ been like that ever since I was little. Anyway, do you ride?" He asked unexpectedly. I nodded my head. "Yes, but never for pleasure, really, only if I had somewhere to go." I told him, not wanting to give away too much. He nodded, "Is Aster expecting you soon?" He asked. I took the hint, somewhat disappointed, "Oh, no, not yetâ€¦ but I'll leave you to your riding." I told him, backing away. Suddenly he reached out to pull my sleeve, stopping me. "No! Umâ€¦ I mean, please, would you care to ride with me? I-If you're not busy, that is." He said.

I blinked for a moment, "Umâ€¦ Prince Hiccup, are you sure that would be alright? Wouldn't it seem strange to be riding with your servant?" I asked him, pondering the strange request. The prince's eyes lit up with hope. "Oh no, no! None of the nobles to whom it would really matter will be up for at least another hourâ€¦ and I'm sure none of my other _assistants_ will care. They know I like to involve everyone when I can." He said. I took note of his blatant non-use of the word servant, wondering if it was yet another title that made him uncomfortable. "Wellâ€¦ if that's the case then it would be an honor." I said, happy to accept the offer. A large grin flew over the prince's face, "Wonderful! It's been ages since I had a riding partnerâ€¦ apart from my idiot cousin, Snotlout." The prince sighed in remembrance of Snotlout, who I assumed he wasn't very fond of. "Well, choose whichever horse you like. They're all mine apart from the two nearest the entrance. Those belong to my father and mother exclusively." He said, leading Toothless out of the small stall to saddle him.

I did as I was told, choosing a light blonde horse named Stormfly. I had noticed he was the second fastest horse in the team during the few days I had spent watching them roam and run around the castle. He stayed put as I saddled and reined him. By the time I was done, prince Hiccup was already outside. "Sorry to keep you waitingâ€¦ Are you going to ride without reins?" I asked him, wondering if he had simply forgotten them. He shook his head. "I don't use reins. They're trained well enough to do without them." He said. I shook my head at the unconventional prince. "Alright, then. Lead the way, my prince." I said. I figured he wouldn't get angry over that title since Aster had called him that yesterday. He nodded and gave the signal for Toothless to go. I followed close behind him, feeling the early morning wind as the first traces of sunlight trailed through the trees.

It was a strange thing to ride a horse for fun. I felt myself trying to look back over my shoulder a few times, an old habit from running away all the time. We galloped around the castle just chatting for a while. Another strange idea I'd had about nobles was that they couldn't think for themselves, but Hiccup had opinions and philosophies on everything. His musings were of an innocent nature, as you could tell he had been quite sheltered from the world, but they were definitely his own. It was nice just to listen to him speak, even though he had this strange awkward stuttering about him that told me he wasn't very used to normal pleasant conversation. You wouldn't notice it when there were only a few words to be spoken, but when he got heated on a particular subject he would stammer. It was quite endearing, I thought, to have such a different way of seeing things.

When we were finished, the sun had risen fully. We led our horses back to the stables and carefully took off their saddles and reins. "That was great! We should really do that again sometime!" He said, a smile playing on his lips. I gave him a smile of my own, "Any time, my prince." I told him. It really had been fun to just ride and talk like we had, and I had taken a liking to the future king's company. In the brief silence before our good-byes, there came a calling through the courtyard. "Oh noâ€¦" prince Hiccup lamented, dragging a hand down his face. "Well, so much for slipping past them today." He said, straightening his tunic and brushing the horse hair off himself. I looked at him in confusion, "Is something wrong?" I asked, wondering what had happened to upset him so.

He took a heavy sigh, as if his next word weighed him down terribly. "That's the girlsâ€¦ and I don't have any flowers as an excuse." He said. I tilted an eyebrow in question, but decided to leave it as their voices neared the entrance to the stables. "Prince Horrendooooooooous!" "Yooohoo!" "It's time for your breakfast, your majesty!" The prince stepped forward and closed his eyes, preparing for the girls heading his way. They entered the open doorway to the stables with cries of joy as they laid their eyes on the prince. "Oh there you are!" They squealed in unison, straightening their skirts and hair. Hiccup pulled his back straight and pulled up a charming grin for them. "Good morning, girls! Oh my, did I forget to leave a note _again?_ I'm so terribly sorry. I was just going out for a ride with Jack, have you met him? He's the new stable boy Aster found."

I stood silent for a moment, taking in the abrupt change in the prince. He nodded at me encouragingly, and said to introduce myself. I stepped forward, nodding to the girls. "Good morning, ladies. You are Prince Hic- I mean, Prince Horrendous' personal maids, correct?" I asked. They all stood silent for a moment, whispering between themselves and blushing. Finally, one of the taller girls with blonde frizzy hair spoke out. "Oh, yes, we are, Mrâ€¦?" She asked, clutching lightly at her skirts while the others giggled around her. "Jack, Jack Frost, no mister." I told her, keeping a polite smile on my face for the prince's sake. No wonder he had tried to avoid them.

"Well, Jack Frost, we'll probably see you around thenâ€¦ but now it's time for the prince to come in for breakfast. His uncle is already at the table waiting for himâ€¦" At this, the prince's smile faded. "Ohâ€¦ is he? Iâ€¦ shouldn't keep him waiting. Excuse me please, girls." He said, exiting without a goodbye. All of the girls' faces dropped after he left. "I wonder why he does that?" "Well, his uncle is cruelâ€¦" "I wish there were some way to help him." The girls bemoaned. "Excuse me, girls, but why is breakfast with his uncle such a bad thing?" I asked them. They all directed their full attention back to me again. "Wellâ€¦ his uncle is Duke Pitchâ€¦ an atrocious man still sore over his brother's rule." "He takes it out on the prince, I suppose, as a way to get back at his brother." "It's so sadâ€¦ whenever you so much as mention his uncle's name, the prince gets terribly depressedâ€¦"

Their sad testimonies left me speechless. It was disheartening to see the prince, who's light had been so brilliant, seem so cold. I dismissed myself from the girls (finding it easier said than done) and went to find Aster in one of the gardens. "So, have a nice ride with the prince there?" he asked, obviously put off by my earlier absence. I nodded with a guilty smile, "Yes, I didâ€¦ but he had to scurry off to his uncle, I suppose." I told him, to which his face dropped much like the prince's had. "Why that nasty old-! What business has he got with Hiccup this early in the mornin'?! " Somehow he had known that the prince would tell me the nick-name during our ride, and I laughed inwardly at how I had been so easily accepted between the two of them. "Breakfast. The girls came and found him not too long ago." I told him, picking up my tools and setting to work at his side. Aster looked put off by the news and huffed slightly, but said nothing more on the subject.

LB

I tried to look as best I could, not wanting my uncle to find

anything wrong with my attire, at least. He would always find something wrong with me, from the habit of crossing my ankles (caused by being too short for the chairs most of my life) to the way I held my spoon just a little bit off to his liking, it would never be good enough. I entered the grand dining room where he sat, waiting. "You're late." He hissed, first thing. I knew better than to expect a good-morning from him by then. "I'm very sorry. Good-morning, Duke Pitch." I greeted, hating the sound of it as the words left my lips. The last thing I wanted to do was wish him a good morning. He huffed in disappointment and waited for me to sit down, carefully watching my ankles. "Don't make such noise when you push your chair in, it's unbecoming." He said. Like always, he found the smallest of things wrong. All I could do was quietly sit back and apologize.

Breakfast went on like this for far too long. When he had finally left, I gave a huge relieved sigh. "How much longer is he planning to stay?" I asked Earl Sand, who had come in to give me the schedule for the day. He shrugged, a man of few words, and gave me a small piece of paper with the day's itinerary. It was brief. I wouldn't have much to do apart from a few fittings and a meeting withâ€¦ who was that?

Earl Sand was already gone before I could ask, replaced by the girls, who had come to take up the dishes. "Would one of you mind drawing a bath for me, please? Oh, and lay out something nice, it seems I've got some company later on tonight." I instructed them before leaving the room. I snuck into the library for some quiet privacy while waiting for the bath and pulled out a few collective poetries given to my Grandfather before I was born. Neither my father nor my mother had any use for them, so I was happy to read the lyrics to my heart's content. The girls found me when I had read a third of the way through the book to tell me the bath was ready. I reluctantly sat the book aside for later and followed them back to the bath. I thanked them lightly, then sank into the warm soapy water. They had scented it again, this time with roses. I didn't mind really, I liked the smell, but I was sure my uncle would find it much too feminine and scold me for it later on.

I sank myself deeper into the water, trying to push him from my mind by humming a hymn I'd heard not too long ago. There was a large window at the foot of the bath, the purpose of which I had never guessed apart from to look at the unique rose garden outside. The smell matched the scenery, something simple that made me happy. I scrubbed at my sides and back with a new soap that lathered well, adding even more bubbles to the water's surface. It was peaceful, and I made myself relax as best as I could, wondering about the meeting that would take place later that day. I felt myself becoming dangerously close to falling asleep when there came a noise from outside. I looked out over the foot of the bath to see Jack and Aster coming to tend the rose garden. They were talking about something, but the window made it impossible to hear. I scrubbed through my hair one last time before getting out, the soap burning my eyes when I wasn't careful. When I had reached the small dress table, I noticed there was a strange lack of towels. "Ummmâ€¦ Oh dear."

I called out to the girls to see if one of them could hear me, but they were probably straightening things up around my hall. Extremely aware of the two gardeners outside, I tried to hide pathetically behind the table (which only came to my waist). I considered wrapping myself in a rug, but that wouldn't do. I looked up with a worried

expression, only to meet the rather confused gaze of Jack, who then proceeded to laugh merrily as a ruby red blush painted my cheeks. "_Oh Dammit!_" I cursed, covering up everything as best as I could. "GIRLS!" I yelled, extremely embarrassed by this point. There was a small scurrying of heeled feet as one of them knocked on the door. "Yes, Prince Horrendous? Is everything alright?"

I took a few breaths to calm myself, all whilst under the laughter-filled stare of Jack. Honestly, had it been any other Prince he would've been beheaded. The nerve! "Yes, girls, you forgot the towel!" again." I told them, rubbing at my face with one hand as if the red on my cheeks would wipe off. They all gave little enlightened gasps and Elizabeth quickly ran into the room with her eyes covered. "Thank you." I said, before turning her in the direction of the door again. I couldn't get the towel on fast enough, tying it tightly around my waist. She had brought in a smaller towel and robe in as well, which I used to dry my hair and cover up with once I was dry. When I looked back over to the window, Jack had gone back to work in the dirt, but he turned around just long enough to wink at me before Aster slapped him on the back of the head. I didn't think my blush could grow any deeper, but it had, miraculously.

I walked back to my room petrified and unsure of how I would be able to face Jack the next time I saw him. Shedding the robe, I pulled on some clothes and climbed into a large cushioned chair in the corner of my room. I buried my face in a pillow, unwilling to go out in the state I was in. I didn't know why it bothered me so much, since I had been bathed by assistants (due to my mother's insistence) up until the age of fifteen. Perhaps it was his laughter, or maybe the wink? I slapped softly at my cheeks, hoping to force the thoughts out of my mind, and stood. I would force myself out of my sulk. I had a meeting. I couldn't be bothered with useless emotions while acting properly before company. After combing my hair, I took back off into the hallway towards the library.

As I neared the dining hall, however, I was confronted by distant shrieks and terrified screams. My embarrassment forgotten for the moment, I jogged down the hall to find the table swarmed in a mess of assistants. "What's going on here?!" I asked, frightened by all the commotion. Many of the women were crying, their tears falling down in discolored splotches on their skirts. The room grew quiet as they decided who should answer me before Aster stepped forward. He spoke softly, where no one else would hear. "I'm! so sorry, Hiccup! It's your mother." He took a long, deep breath before continuing,

"!She's been poisoned.

* * *

><p>Aaaaaaaaand... cue the plot!

_This is already going so much smoother than Funny Name was like
woooooowwww._

Anywhoo, enjoy your cliffhanger *winks*

Chapter 3

I was standing across the room, still in semi-shock when the room grew quiet and everyone turned to face prince Hiccup. I hadn't heard his arrival, but his presence was like that of a calm before the storm. It was something that didn't feel quite there, like a dream, yet it was tangible at the same time. He held his head high, somehow, before Aster turned to give him the news. I couldn't hear what he said, but I knew it would be short and to-the-point. Hiccup's face twisted into a look of confusion at first, then dread, and finally of terrible sadness. He didn't shed a tear, though, as he walked over to the table where his mother's form laid still. All eyes were on him as his lips pressed into a tight line. "Someoneâ€¦ send for my father, he should be out in the city with the grand master knight, and when he's been foundâ€¦ have the church bells rung." A few servants exited the room to do as he had instructed while the women continued to mourn in the corners.

The prince lifted his head. "Asterâ€¦ bring her some lilies, please. Those were her favorite." He charged. Aster nodded, and left to do so, beckoning for me to leave with him. With the prince's last words being those to Aster, he hastened out of the room. I caught a glimpse of his face as he opened the door, finding it to be oddly devoid of emotion, holding back. He was stronger than I would've given him credit for. Maybe it was still just shock, and he hadn't fully taken it in yet, but you could see it in the way he held his mouth closed tight. He was hiding it away, keeping up appearances. I suddenly wondered what his real face was. Was it radiant, like the first time we met, or overly friendly like with the girls, or even awkward and opinionated like when we went riding? Which was the genuine prince Hiccup? I thought about it, and soon realized that this faceâ€¦ that was him.

Gods know why I wanted to, but my arms ached to comfort the royal. It was obvious he had been hurting for a long time. He left the room before I could do anything, though, rushing out the door. I found my way back over to Aster, who led me through the halls and out into the open air of one of the gardens. The sunlight felt stuffier than usual, like it was trying too hard to be happy. We cut the tips off of all the different kinds of lilies, laying them in the crooks of our arms. Their deep yellow and red pollen fell on our shirts like colored flour, leaving small rust-colored stains. They smelled the same as they had yesterday, but now the fragrance was the signal of an ending, with a heaviness that wasn't there before.

"Asterâ€¦ who do you think it was?"

My senior only huffed, scowling at the flowers with a sadness in the silvers of his eyes. "I don't 'ave the slightestâ€¦ but whoever they are, they deserve worse than what any of us on Earth could evah treat 'em to. Vallhalerama was a good womanâ€¦ above all else, a fine woman, and an even better queen. Lord knows she was a wonderful, if not a little overprotective, mother. Iâ€¦ can't imagine how Hiccup's taking all this. For his sakeâ€¦ for his sake more than anything I hope they find the bastard." I had learned over the past few days that Aster would rant and yell and be an overall grumpy bunny, but right then I saw what it was like for him to be truly angry. He didn't yell, but his voice held a lower growl that made you quiver. Forget looks, Aster could kill with his words.

When we both had large armfuls of lilies, we put them into matching vases (usually reserved for parties and such). Walking back into the room where the dead queen was being handled by the castle physician was difficult for me. I didn't like seeing corpses, especially those of people I had never met. They made me uncomfortable, bringing back unwanted memories of the crusades. Aster asked the physician and two other servants where they would be taking the queen. They said they would take her to an extra chamber to put her in a bed for the king and prince and other royals to say their prayers and farewells. We followed them as they carried the late queen to said room and laid her down. Aster and I placed the flowers on either side of her on the two bedside tables. Unable to contain my curiosity, I snuck a look at the late queen.

Her eyes had been shut, for which I was grateful. Many people would say she could be sleeping peacefully, but I hated the overdone observation. People had said the same thing about my own mother when she was gone. Sleeping? Who wakes up from death? My eyebrows furrowed, putting a knot in my forehead. Why were all of these memories coming back now? I had repressed them for years, focusing only on myself, on the road ahead. Running was all that mattered, nothing else. What matters now that didn't before? I inquired inwardly.

I was sure she had been a beautiful woman when she was alive. I wondered if her cheeks had held the same rosy tint her son's did. They certainly shared the freckles that graced their cheeks and hands. My curiosity sated, died down, and I looked away quickly. We were coming out of the room when great booming footsteps could be heard down the hall. They were approaching fast, but Aster recognized them immediately. "Step to the side, Jack." He said, walking to put his back against the wall. I followed his lead, wondering why I did so at first. Then the footsteps turned the corner, and a man with a long red beard and terrified eyes came running towards the door we had just left through. When he and a few other men had disappeared behind the door, Aster took the servant's staircase back down to the small lodgings we were provided.

The hallway was in an uproar, and I took note of the lack of kitchen personnel. "Surely it wasn't chef Sheepmeade!" "No! I don't think it would be him! Maybe one of his assistants?" "Well, Fishlegs wouldn't do it. He's too dumb to pull off that sort of thing!" "What if it was the gardener?!" "No! Absolutely not. Aster would never do anything to hurt the prince! and especially not the queen! he was her most avid fanatic after all!" I tried to see Aster's reaction to that particular piece of gossip, wondering what the woman had meant by it. He flinched slightly, but his face stayed in the same frown it had been in since he heard the news. I took a mental picture of the woman, saving it for later if Aster or I would ever need an ally. Couldn't hurt, anyway. Collecting faces was just another habit left from running.

We walked back to the gardener's shed on the side of the castle where we grabbed our tools and supplies. Aster said nothing as we worked through the Earth. It set me on edge, usually he would at least pick on me once or twice for not getting something right, but now he just silently corrected it himself. I left him alone, getting better at knowing when to shut up. I hated the disturbed quiet, it only reminded me that I had thoughts I'd rather keep from thinking. The sun beat down on my back through my shirt and sun hat. Aster had

laughed at me for wearing the hat earlier, since it was too big for me, but I'd later explained to him my aversion to sunburns and he'd nodded in surrender.

I felt the dirt beneath my hands. The unwanted memories had brought along unwanted feelings as well. My heart felt heavy and had sunk so far into my stomach that lunch was soon forgotten. Aster felt the same, though he didn't voice an opinion on the matter, so we worked through the time we would've usually spent over the meal instead.

* * *

><p>It felt like something had been ripped apart inside of me. Why were all these people hovering around me?! Gods, I just wanted them to go away. I wanted -no, needed- to be alone. There was the ever-present sting behind my eyes. I wouldn't cry in front of these people. They were all crying about my mother. Why should they get to cry? They did it to attract attention to themselves, to show their fake compassion. I hated them all for doing something so selfish. They hadn't let me slip away like I'd wanted to. Instead they kept up the incessant apologies and testimonials. All I wanted was to go and see my motherâ€¦| what was left of her, anyway.<p>

The only break I got from the crowd was when I excused myself to the lavatory. Inside, I washed my hands, looking in the mirror. People had always said my mother and I looked so similar. She was in the shape of my face and the freckles on my cheeks. We had the same laugh. It was hard to accept that she was gone. I had to see itâ€¦| see her, for myself. Somewhere in the back of my mind I knew she was gone. I didn't want to acknowledge it. I kept my hands busy with the water, cupping it in my hands, then releasing it back into the bowl again. Unable to calm down, I took a handful and splashed it onto my face, then another, and another, trying to wash away something that wasn't there.

You have to pull yourself together.

I told myself this as many times as it took for me to stop washing and dry my face and hands. Walking back out of the wash room, I was once again bombarded with a fresh new round of nobles. I paid them no mind this time, walking towards my mother's room, telling them all that I had somewhere else I needed to be. As I walked through the crowded halls, busy with people coming and going and trying to get a look at my mother. The crowd got denser the further I went, but when they realized it was me coming through, they quickly parted. Without realizing it, I had come to the door behind which my mother would lay. Two guards stood outside, pushing eager nobles out of the way. They were about to treat me the same way before they saw my face. "Prince Horrendousâ€¦| Your father has left. You may go inside now."

Taking a deep breath, I tried to steady myself for the scene ahead. One of the guards opened the door, allowing me to go inside. I walked into the dark room, the curtains drawn, lit only by a few candelabras. The scent of lilies lightly hit my nose as I walked in. The fragrance reminded me of my childhood, back when my mother would come to watch my lessons in the garden. Aster would always give me a lily to take to her when the lesson was over. She'd smile and nod at Aster across the way, then take me by the hand inside for a snack.

Now the familiar smell was a sort of comfort. I walked to the edge of the bed, where a chair was. I assumed my father had sat in that seat not too long ago. I took his place, lowering myself into the chair. Finally I found the courage to look up and see the sight I had hoped wouldn't be there. She looked lifeless, which made sense, consideringâ€¦|

I let out a shaky sigh. Now that it would be okay for the tears to flow, they wouldn't. "Morning, mum." I told her, laying both of my hands atop the blanket. There was no reply, which I'd expected. I don't know why I said the words, it was already deep into the afternoon, but I just felt the need to say them. Her hand was still reached out from where my father had held onto it. I pushed my hand toward hers, tentatively, until I had laid my hand inside hers. It felt wrong. The warmth of the hand that had led me through my life was now gone. As I realized this, I finally let myself accept that she was lost. There was nothing I could do, she would be gone and would stay that way until I would join her on my own deathbed.

I don't know how long I spent sitting there, just holding her hand, before one of the girls came to fetch me for dinner. Before leaving, I pulled a lily out of it vase, laying it inside my mother's hand. "That's from Aster." I told her, before leaning down to press a kiss to her forehead. "â€¦|Good-night, mother."

With those words, I left the room. The guards looked away, for which I was grateful. Though I hadn't cried, I was sure I didn't look my best. The maid that had come to get me earlier had already left. I walked down the now empty halls to the dining room. At the head of the table sat my father, a blank expression on his face. We had the same way of dealing with things. We kept quiet. We kept to our own thoughts. It was easier that way, not having to let someone in. Look what happened when you did... you'd just end up losing them anyway.

Perhaps it was a blessing that I hadn't had many strong relationships if that was how things would turn out. I took my seat, each noise I made echoing in the large hall. Two assistants came out, each holding a plate. Usually there would be a thirdâ€¦| but he wouldn't be needed anymore. I wondered if that would be something that kept happening. Would it eventually all fade out, even from memory? Would there come a time when I would forget about the third assistant? Would there be a time when the scent of lilies no longer brought me fond memories of the days spent as a clueless child?

I didn't know. I didn't want to. For once in my life, I didn't want to think. Iâ€¦| didn't want to be alone. I didn't want to face the quiet. I stood up, pushing my chair in. My father finally looked up, giving me a questioning gaze. "Excuse me." I said, walking to the door. "Horrendous!" My father called, but made no other effort to try and stop me. I found myself walking to one of the gardens. The sunset in the distance told me that the day would be over in less than an hour. I found myself wandering, unsure of what to do. I didn't feel like riding, but I didn't feel like sitting down either. I had lapped the castle three times when a movement caught my eye. In one of the gardens was Jack. Aster had been working in another garden on the opposite side, but Jack was just sitting in one of the large lounge swings. He had his head tilted towards the sky, his mouth slightly agape as if he were speaking.

Abandoning the small track I had been following, I walked towards him, looking for some conversation. As I got closer, I realized that he wasn't speaking, but singing. He had a nice voice. It sounded like the carolers at Christmastime. He was still singing softly, not having noticed my approach. As he neared a part he couldn't remember, he began to whistle. The song would go high in pitch for a moment, then drop low and I wondered how he made himself do that. When he reached the end of the song I let my presence be known with light applause. His head snapped forward in surprise, his hands coming down to his lap from where they had been on his neck before. "Prince Hiccup?" He asked, not expecting it to have been me. "You have a beautiful voice." I told him, sitting down beside him. He rolled his eyes, "Nahâ€¦ but thanks." He gave a small crooked smile before it drooped into a concerned frown. I could feel it coming, but I didn't want the words to leave his mouth. "Pleaseâ€¦ Please don't apologize. I'm tired of telling everyone I'm fine. I justâ€¦ need away from myself."

The words were odd, but Jack seemed to understand what it meant as the frown left his face. "Alright, Umâ€¦ Have you ever heard that song before?" He asked. Happily accepting the distraction, I turned back to him, "No, I haven't. What is it?" He smiled and leaned in. It's called Veni Creator Spiritus. I heard it in a church I had taken refuge in whenâ€¦ well, after a long trip. It's meant to be sung by a choir of women butâ€¦ I guess I just took a liking to it." He said, his eyes lighting up at the story. I nodded, "It suits you well. N-not because it's meant to be sung by girls! It's just you, um, you sing it well." I mentally slapped myself for the slip-up while Jack let out cheery guffaws at my side. I felt the blush coming to my cheeks, reminding me of why I had been blushing earlierâ€¦

* * *

><p>The prince suddenly looked away. He had been blushing at his folly in words before, but now his cheeks were lit up as red as the sunset. "Prince Hiccup? Are you alright?" I asked. He tried to hide himself by putting a hand over his mouth, stretching his fingers to cover as much of the blush as he could. "I'm per-! Ahem... I'm, uh, perfectly fine." He said. His voice had cracked. I didn't laugh, even though I felt the corners of my mouth begging to pull upward. "Sayâ€¦ that blush wouldn't happen to be about earlier, would it?" I asked, knowing full well what I was getting myself into. My words had been a bulls-eye, I could tell by the way he averted his eyes and turned away from me. "A-Absolutely not! And I'm not blushing!" He said, covering his face fully now.<p>

"Pffft! Oh, sure you're not, Hiccup- Oh! Um, I mean, prince Hiccup." I had to correct myself. Hiccup waved it off, though, his face still half covered with his other hand. "It's fine. I was kind of hoping you'd leave off the 'prince' soon anyway." He said. I shook my head. Who ever heard of a prince that didn't like being called a prince? "Alright then, _Hiccup_, you sure you're not blushing?" I wasn't about to leave the subject, it was too fun watching him. He acted nothing like my other "friends" had. Robbers and ruffians weren't exactly easy blushers. "I'm not!" He objected, once more covering his face. "Oh, really? How am I supposed to believe that when I can't see your face as proof?" I asked, a smirk crawling up my lips.

"You can justâ€¦ugh! Fine, fine! I'm blushing! Happy now?" He finally

gave in, uncovering his eyes to glare at me. I smiled. "Yes. Very, actually." I nudged an elbow into his ribs. "I win." He laughed, his blush finally dying down a little. "Oh! I was going to ask you how you did that earlier." He started. I tilted my head in confusion, "Did what?" He turned towards me, his eyes focused and determined. "How you whistled. I've tried to before but I just can't do it." He said. His seriousness made me laugh a little. "You can't whistle?" He pouted a little. "No. Like I said, I've tried but it just won't happen." Just how much thought had he put into whistling? I chuckled once more at the silly prince, before turning to face him. "Um, alright. I guess you start by puckering your lips." I said, modeling for him. It looked a little funny, and I laughed inwardly at how strange the words sounded. He did as I had explained sincerely, following my lead. "And then you just sort of keep your lips in a tight 'o' while you just, um, blow." I modeled this for him, making the first three notes to the song I had been singing earlier.

He tried, and failed, but had the right idea. You could tell he'd almost get it out and then it just wouldn't happen. Just like he'd said. I knitted my brow in confusion, leaning in to see if there was anything he was outwardly doing wrong. After a while of just watching him blow fast air, I realized what the problem was. "You're tucking your lips inward." I said. My sudden thought shocked him, and he stopped blowing for a second. "Huh?" His lips were still in a small pout since he had been puckering for a while. I nodded my head, "That's what you're doing wrong. At the very end you tuck your lips in instead of pushing them out a little further."

I was proud at my observation, which Hiccup seemed to take to heart. "Oh, ok. Um, I'll try that, then." He said, only just realizing how awkward his request had been earlier. He puffed his lips out once more, blowing again. This time he focused hard towards the end, where he would usually tuck his lips under, and forced them forward instead. I waited patiently, wanting to prove my idea correct. Just then, a small high-pitched noise escaped his lips. "Ah A-ha! J-Jack! I did it!" He beamed, eyes bright with excitement. I chewed on the inside of my cheek, trying not to laugh too hard at his reaction. "Good job." I told him, reaching over to pat his back. He flushed a light pink once more, but he just couldn't keep his smile down. "Um Thanks, Jack. That was fun." He told me. I nodded. "Glad to hear it."

Suddenly the darkness around us caught his eye, and he jumped off the swing. "I'd better get inside, they'll start worrying about where I am." He said, wobbling awkwardly on one foot before turning to smile at me. He looked different from earlier, his shoulders no longer weighed down and his smile reaching his eyes. I was glad I had helped him look that way, knowing for myself how hard the first day was. When he got to his room his smile would fade, but at least he had this small moment of happiness. I could give him that much. He rubbed at his arms as a chilly night breeze swept through the garden, ruffling his hair and revealing two small braids hidden on the inside. "Good-night, Jack. I'll see you in the morning." He said with a smile. I nodded, "Good-night. Sleep well! Don't let the boogeyman get you." I said with a wink. Hiccup rolled his eyes, "Alright. Pleasant dreams." He said, before turning towards an entrance into the castle.

The stars had poked out from beneath their dark cover. Some of them twinkled slightly while others glowed deep reds and blues. I found

myself looking up once more into the great wide expanse. I was about to begin whistling the tune from before again when I heard someone approaching. I turned to see that it was Aster, but he was facing away from me, towards the castle. Upon further inspection, I realized that he wasn't just facing the castle, but looking up at a window on the upper floor. The window belonged to the room the late queen had been placed in earlier. I wondered what Aster was doing so late, just staring at a window. I was about to say something, but he began speaking first.

"Hello, Val, it's meâ€¦ How did you like the lilies? I made sure to pick the very bestâ€¦ There were lots of the stargazers bloomin', and I know those are your favorite soâ€¦" Aster paused, bringing his hand up to his face and turning to where I could make out his profile in the moonlight. "We hadn't talked for a while, so I figured it was time I said somethin'." Aster gave a dark chuckle, even though it was lacking any humor. "Guess I'm a bit late." Letting his hand slide down, I could see the pain in his green eyes from where I sat. I wondered if I should say anything, but my curiosity got the best of me, and I just listened. "You know, you neva answered my questionâ€¦ Lord knows I wish you would have, any answer you could've given would be bettah than this torture of never knowin'." He paced back and forth a few steps. "Youâ€¦ You knew I loved you. I know you did. Iâ€¦ well, I basically told you so every dayâ€¦ Guess that's what I get for fallin' in love with a princessâ€¦" At those words, his tears spilled free.

They shocked me, and I felt like a horrible intruder, but I just couldn't stop watching. I kept my breath still, making sure he wouldn't notice me as I huddled further down below the back of the swing. Aster let a few muffled sobs escape his lips. "Even though you aren't here anymoreâ€¦ I promise I'll take care of Hiccup. He's already like my own son." After this, Aster paused for a small moment,

"Hellâ€¦ he is my son."

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><p>Wow dang. Not even I saw this coming.

Anywhoo, If you're going to comment would you please help me out? I can't decide which direction I want the story to go in since they lead to two very different stories but I can't pick, so if you could please comment with either the word "Babycakes" or "Sugarplum" whichever one gets more comments I will go that direction!

Thanks :)

4. Chapter 4

Chapter 4

The morning light fell too bright on my eyes. I ran a hand over my face, rubbing at my eyes as I tried soothe the headache I felt approaching. The covers were warm, but the air around me was cool with the leftovers from the night's darkness. I sat up, wincing at the temperature change on my back. I heaved a large sigh and slid out of bed. Careful to keep on the rug until I could reach my slippers

and robe, I mentally prepared myself for the day ahead. I left my room, not really knowing where I would go. I didn't know where the girls were. Perhaps they were being questioned. They'd probably be crying, and though they were annoying, I didn't want them upset. They really were sweet, after allâ€¦ just a bit noisy.

I briefly wondered if Jack had or would be questioned as well. The guards and knights would obviously be suspicious of anyone that had come in contact with the castle's food supply, including the gardeners. How would he prove himself innocent? It was clear that he'd been some sort of criminal before, even if he tried not to let it on. What if they took his background as some sort of indicationâ€¦? I pushed the thought from my mind. I had enough things to worry about as it was without Jack being added to the pile, but even so, the thought wormed itself into the back of my mind. I found myself avoiding the dining room, unable to face my father or my mother's empty seat. Instead, I wandered back to my room, restless, to put on some normal clothes.

Skiping breakfast, I went outside to the stables, their confines having often been a haven to me before. There I was met with another voice, the same one as last night, only this time it sung a lively song with an upbeat tempo and rhyming lyrics. Peeking inside, I saw Jack swaying slightly with his broom, dancing as he swept. I leaned in, about to say hello when my foot caught on a loose brick in the floor. The clang of falling buckets and utensils caught the attention of Jack, who turned around in surprise. "Hiccup?! Are you alright?" He asked, offering me his hand. I took it and pulled myself up. After dusting myself off, I told him I was fine. He laughed, "Spying on me again, were you?" I rolled my eyes, but felt heat on my cheeks at the accusation. "Noâ€¦ I just got here, actually."

Having fully recovered from the fall, I walked over to Toothless, who's ears shot up in excitement, a whiny escaping him. "Morning, bud. Wanna go for a ride?" I asked him. The horse neighed a happy yes as I opened the gate to his stall. While I proceeded to ready him for the ride, I turned to Jack. "Well, are you just going to stand there or is Stormfly getting a ride as well?" Jack's eyes lit up at the invitation, and he immediately went to go free the other horse. For someone that appeared so stubborn he sure was easy to win over. I saddled Toothless and led him out, but Jack had beaten me outside this time. He was already perched atop Stormfly waiting for me as I mounted the black horse and set off at a slow trot.

"So, last time I did most of the talking, now it's your turn." I said, twisting a little on the horse so I could face him. "Tell me about you. My life's been an overall boring experience, so you might as well tell me about yours." At this he gave a look of worry, but before he could protest, I interrupted, "I already know that you were a criminal, if that's what's kept you so tight-lipped. I was outside when they drug you to the dungeon. When Aster brought you out to meet me I immediately recognized your white hair." I told him. His features held a look of reserved panic, but he was oddly composed despite. "Well Iâ€¦ guess there's no point in lying, thenâ€¦" He sighed, "I had wanted to keep it from you, but I guess that just wasn't meant to be. You would've found out sooner or later anyway. So, yes, I've been a criminal, but I honestly never did anything worthy of that dungeonâ€¦ damn chicken." He said, scowling into space.

I must have stared at him with a very confused expression because he began to elaborate on the reason he'd been thrown in the dungeon. I listened to the story, laughing as he got to the part where he fell off the roof right onto a royal guard on his horse. He told me more about his family and his parents and how he didn't know where his baby sister was. Then he lightened the mood with tales of his travels across the world. He told me about deserts and wide plains and oceans that went on forever. I could listen to him talk about it for days. "Ahâ€¦ I wish I had as exciting of a life as you, Jack. You make the outside world sound so amazing." I tried to picture all of the things he had told me. I'd seen some of them in paintings before, so I had a good idea of what the ocean was like, but the desert was a hard thing to imagine. Jack laughed, "'Outside world'? Just how sheltered of a person are you?"

I ducked my head, both saddened and embarrassed by the question. "Well Iâ€¦ I've never been outside the castleâ€¦" I told him, signaling to Toothless that he could run a little faster. Jack caught up with me quickly, his eyes wide with shock. "You've never been outside the castle? Ever? Butâ€¦ _why?!_" He asked, pulling up beside Toothless. I slowed the horse a bit, coming to an easy trot. "My motherâ€¦ she said something about corruption onceâ€¦ I can't remember her exact reasoning. Anyway, it wasn't really my choice butâ€¦ well honestly I don't want to leave. This is all I've ever known." I told him, revealing my deepest secret with ease. I wondered how that happened, how the words flowed so easily. I suppose I just really needed someone to know. Somehow, it didn't matter if the person was Jack, since I had grown this strange sort of trust in him.

"You've really never been outside the castle walls?" He asked, disbelief still painting his tone. "Not once." I told him, turning Toothless back towards the stables. "How do you stand it? That must be the most tiring thing ever! I don't think I could be stuck in one place for that longâ€¦ I'd go mad." He said. "_You_ would think so, seeing as how you've been everywhere, but it's not really bad at all. The assistants are nice, and I'm not too fond of large groups of people or new things so it's almost nice. I do wish I could go see things, like your desert and such, butâ€¦ well I guess I'll see it soon enough anyway." I told him. He tilted his head in question, "You'll see it soon? So you're getting out, then?" He asked. I nodded, "When I turn nineteen. I'll be given a short tour of the country and thenâ€¦" I sighed, "Then I'll be sent to the warfront with my father."

My face dropped. The more I thought about it, the worse my desire to just stay in the castle became. Jack and I stopped, dismounted our horses, and led them back inside the stables. "â€¦Why would they do that? You've never even seen the world and they're just going to plop you down right in the worst part of it? Whose stupid idea was that?!" I pulled Toothless back into his stall as he whined in protest. "My father's. He was never too fond of my mother's idea to keep me cooped up in here. Said it was just her way of coddling me. Anyway, eventually they both gave up and decided to put their two plans together, leaving me in my current predicament." I told him. His eyebrows came together on his forehead and he pulled his hand into a fist at his side. "Hiccup that's- and excuse me- but that's absolute shit! Don't you get a choice in the matter? Who died and made themâ€¦ oh. Well, you get the point anyway." He said.

I laughed, but shook my head. "That's just how it is for royals. Your whole life is planned out before you're even born. No, it's not fair butâ€¦ some things just_ aren't_ sometimes." I told him. He was already waiting for me at the stable door. The girls would probably be back soon, but honestly all I wanted to do was stand there and talk with Jack for the rest of the day. He was good distractionâ€¦ he kept my thoughts occupied so I wouldn't have to think about things others would force me to think about. I hadn't cried about my mother, and I didn't know why. There was a constant ache in my heart, but I felt as if it couldn't be healed with tears. "Well that's justâ€¦ ugh. That's not very nice." He said finally, unable to argue with my earlier point. I smiled, "Its fine. Honestly when you've had a lifetime to get used to it, you don't really mind."

I walked back over to him as he walked my way as well. We were just passing through the threshold when Jack didn't notice the bucket still left lying on the floorâ€¦

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><p>I felt the bucket before I saw it, and my feet went swiveling underneath me. I fell forward and everything seemed to go slow yet swift at the same time. All at once my hands slammed into something hard while my face met something soft. As I opened my eyes I realized that I had fallen atopâ€¦ Hiccup?<p>

Oh gods.

I pulled my face away as fast as I could. Hiccup's cheeks were redder than I'd ever seen them before. The blush claimed even his ears and neck. Thatâ€¦ that couldn't have been hisâ€¦?

"J-Jackâ€¦?" He asked. We hadn't moved really, I had just pulled my face away. Butâ€¦ what was that ache? It was all kinds of annoying, but at the same time it felt very warm. I just didn't really _want_ to move.

I met his eyes and for I second I noticed how green they were. Up close, they had brown mixed in, so it looked like there was a small forest inside them. They were wide with surprise and wonder as he tried to look away but couldn't quite make himself. We were still so close that our noses were almost touching. Moving slow, I placed my forehead against his. Shallow breaths escaped his lips as he tried to figure out what was going on. I was probably tying my own noose butâ€¦

I leaned in further, to where our lips were almost touching. Slipping one of my hands into his at our side, I waited and noticed how the freckles on his cheeks moved as his eyes widened. "Jack?" He asked, barely a whisper as the words blew into my mouth. It wasn't really a question, though. It was permission. I closed the distance between our lips softly. His breath hitched despite his earlier consent. I kissed him once, twice, and again and again until I lost count. Soon his eyes misted over, succumbing to the sensation he'd never experienced before. His mouth moved awkwardly against mine at first, but soon found a rhythm as I led him further into our embrace. I squeezed lightly at his hand intertwined with mine. Soon it became evident he'd need to breathe, so I let him rest by moving to his cheeks instead. I peppered my lips down his jawline and up to his ear, where I lightly blew. "Ah! Jackâ€¦ thatâ€¦"

I grinned lightly at the small moan I had elicited, and trailed down the planes of his cheekbones back to his lips. I gently pressed mine to his once more. Our breaths mixed and one of his hands shyly brushed up my forearm to rest on my shoulder, while I still held tightly the other one. By this point he had closed his eyes, trusting me even though it was his first time. When it felt right to, I pulled away. His eyes opened halfway. For a moment we laid there breathing and waiting for the other's reaction. I gave him a small, warm smile and tried to tell him it was fine. He stared back at me for a few seconds before looking away from my eyes to my hair, where he laced his fingers into the white strands. He pulled me lightly forward again. I didn't resist, letting him pull me forward into one more long, tender kiss. It seemed to last eternities, not that it bothered me, though. When he finally let me go, he smiled slightly, one corner of his mouth pulling up timidly. I gripped his hand again, reassuring him and myself that there was nothing to be scared of.

"Prince Horrendous!" "Your breakfast will get cold!" "Prince? Oh, where has he run off to this time?!"

Hiccup's eyes widened in surprise, his cheeks burning a fiery red. I pulled away from him and helped him to his feet as the unwanted maids approached. Their shoes clacked on the brick floor while we were still dusting ourselves off. "Your entourage approaches." I told him, swinging my arm forward to invite him to his escape. The girls popped their heads through the door not two seconds after I said so. "Ah! Found you!" "Out with Jack again, hmm?" "Really, you've been sneaking out much too often lately." Hiccup nodded his head. "Yes, yes. Sorry for the trouble m'ladies. Has breakfast already been served?" He asked, trying to slip back into his role of a prince. "Yes! It's growing chill as we speak!" Said the blonde one. Elizabeth was her name? "Ah, then I apologize for my tardiness. I was a bit-" he snuck a glance in my direction, his cheeks warming. "tied up." He finished, before walking towards them.

As he did, I noticed a small bit of hay clinging to his hair. I walked forward, placing a hand on his shoulder to stop him. He turned around in surprise and half-panic, so I decided to play with him. Lifting one hand around his head, I let my fingertips gently graze across his face. I twisted my fingers playfully in his hair before pulling out the piece of straw. He shuddered sweetly as I pulled the hay teasingly across his jawline. "You had this stuck in your hair." I explained, turning out of the girls' line of view to wink at him. "Th-Thank you." He said, straitening his jacket before turning back towards the girls. "Thank you for fetching me. Has my father eaten already?" He asked, to which they nodded. "Very well, then. If you'll excuse me, J- Jack." He trailed off at the end, unlike his usual façade. I nodded with a slight smile and turned away to pretend to tend to one of the horses.

I heard their footsteps fall away and let go of a shaky breath I wasn't aware I'd been holding. _Why did I do that?_ Of course this question only occurred to me after the event. Common sense had been nowhere to be found earlier. I'd just kissed a prince. I'd just kissed a royal, and a man, at that. Of course there wasn't really any difference from the way it felt with a woman. except that there had been an invisible lighting there that hadn't been in any of my past experiences. It was almost as if it had been more sacred? Like there was a rule to be broken, and unknowingly, we had entered into

its throes. I pressed my fist up to my mouth, taking in what had just happened. Shouldn't I feel disgusted? Honestly, that was the furthest thing from my mind. If anything, it felt more pure than any other kiss I'd ever had the pleasure of having. I couldn't help but feel my own heart skitter a beat when remembering. Not to mention that I was sure it had been his first. Stormfly whinnied loudly at the lack of attention, so I stroked her nose a little, still consumed in thought. How would he react the next time we saw each other? Would he play it off? Act like nothing had happened? That seemed like the most rational course for him seeing as how he was, despite my wishes, a royal. I let out a long sigh. I knew that was what needed to happen butâ€|

I really justâ€| didn't want it to.

* * *

><p>Breakfast was a blur.<p>

My mind jumped all over the place. I was dazed, trying to understand what had just happened as best as I could. That had been my first. I was sure he knew it too, which made it all the more embarrassing. Was I ever going to have cool cheeks around him? Probably never again. My heart was still beating rapidly in my chest. I pushed some food I didn't even bother to look at inside my mouth, trying to choke down my feelings. I had to get a hold of myself. I couldn't be giddy today of all days. After all, my mother had justâ€|

The thought instantly sobered me, dragging me back down from the clouds above. I suddenly found myself relieved of any appetite I might've had. I stood up from the table amidst looks of worry from the assistants that attended. I walked out without a word, they wouldn't be needed. Everyone would be able to figure it out. The funeral would be held in three days, enough time for all the other royals to make the hasty trip up to the castle city. That meant many unwanted and needy relatives I'd rather have nothing to do with would be taking up every waking moment trying to take up both mine and my father's attention. I hated the entirety of my family outside of the castle. They were all money-minded idiots with deep pockets for hearts. They were so shallow in their view of things and how the world should be that I had no reason to even attempt to like them. Apart from the fact that, once again, I had to be perfectly polite since I was a prince. Sometimes I wished I had been born as some beggar's son. At least from there I would be able to choose my own way.

I wandered down to a garden, a risky move considering I might run into Jack there. Fortunately, there was no sign of him, only Aster working silently alone. I let out a soft relieved sigh before walking over. "Well if you're done screwing off with the horse get yahself over here and pull some of these weeds." He said. I laughed at his mistake, but decided to go with it, playfully dropping down to my knees beside him. "Whatever you say there, Aster." I said, grinning as his head snapped up in surprise. "Hiccup! Sorry there, mate. Thought you were Jackyâ€| I- I mean Jack." He said, brushing some dirt off onto his trousers. I laughed, but didn't move. I fiddled with one of the weeds. "Remember when I used to help you with this sort of thing and nurse Elsa would get so cross because I'd gotten myself dirty?" I asked. Aster's mouth tilted up at the corner. "Aye, that I do. You were still such a small thing thenâ€| had no idea what

being a prince really entailed." He said, a small bit of sadness creeping up into his eyes.

My own eyes mirrored his before looking back at the dirt. "I liked those days." I said, pulling up at one of the small plants between my fingers. He nodded, thinking back to his own memories of the time. "I already miss her." I told him, finally confiding in the one person I knew my thoughts would be safe with. I could feel Aster's heavy gaze as I picked at another weed before sitting back on my knees with a sigh. "They haven't figured out who it was stillâ€" and when I think of it being one of the assistants- people I've known my whole life- I can't help but feel like something'sâ€" not quite right. I'm honestly scared for it to be any of them. How will I face the person when they figure out who it was? Then again, they might not even figure out who it was. I justâ€" don't know what the better option is."

Aster tilted his head, compassion lining his features. "Well, that's how I know yah've been raised right. Only a person as decent as yah would've kept their thoughts free of revenge up to this pointâ€" She made sure of that, at least. I know the kingdom will be left in a good set of hands." He said, reaching over to pat my back. I smiled slightly, accepting the praise. At least one person thought I was capable of running a kingdom. I still wasn't convinced, though. "I haven't seen yah as much I'd like these past few months. Yah've been all trapped up in lessons and what-have-they from dawn till dusk these past few weeksâ€" All in time for the birthday I suppose." He mused. I groaned, "Don't remind me. The wretched day just keeps growing closer."

Aster was the only person (apart from Jack) to which I had expressed my extreme aversion to my birthday. He smiled sadly, "Ah, It'll be alright, mate, you'll see." He said. I rose up off the ground and leaned backwards to straighten my spine. "I hope you're right." I told him. I was about to ask him something when the castle gates opened, dissipating my train of thought. "That would be my cue, then." I said, chewing on my lip. I really didn't want to go meet anyone. From the look of the carriage that would beâ€" "Godsdammit." I cursed under my breath. Aster looked a little put off but said nothing to correct me as he saw who it was that had arrived. "Wellâ€" have fun with that." He said, turning back to the weeds. I took that as his good-bye and left the garden, walking towards the entrance.

The horses manning the carriage pulled to a stop and I was instantly aware of the dark mood inside. Once or twice while the carriage sat idle I heard a few roaring insults and howlings of pain. I rubbed at my temple as I contemplated just how long they might intrude upon the castle. They were always the first to arrive and the last to leave. The next few days were sure to be hell as they saw fit to torture me. As soon as I had given up on my manners and was about to walk inside, someone came flying out of the carriage door. It was Tuffnut, one of the Thorston twins. He landed heavily on his backside, rolling a few feet before scraping to a stop in front of me. I jumped back in surprise, not wanting any of the anger that emanated from him to be turned on me. "You bloody halfwit! Snotface get yor arse out here an' I'll rip yah a new one!" He yelled back at the carriage, scrambling to his feet and almost tripping over his rage. "Oh shut yer trap, yah ugly horse-rat." Snotlout's voice travelled through the air, leaving me stuck to the spot with a nauseous feeling in my stomach. Tuffnut

rolled back into the carriage to scrabble some more with Snotlout, prolonging the time I would have to spend waiting for them.

I straightened my face and forced my hands into fists at my side. I would try to appear as calm as possible. If there was anything I was good at, it was pretending. All I had to do was act tough, right? Very well, then. I'd act tough. I puffed my chest out, keeping my head high. It felt a little over-done but they probably wouldn't notice. There were a few more muffled yells in the carriage before I felt something touch my back. I flinched forward, unaware of how jumpy I really was, and flipped around to see Jack there. He leaned in close to my ear, and before I could stop it, the blush had already started. "Calm down. It's alright, they're not even out of the carriage yet." He said, moving his hand up to rub a few comforting circles into my shoulder. I let go of a huge breath and deflated. "Sorry, I guess I'm just anxious is all." I told him, leaning into his hand. He chuckled softly, "Good gods, man, do you always keep your shoulders this strung? Relax. From the sound of it you have a few moments to get your head together." He took his other hand and began working the other shoulder. Was I really that tense? Gods, did that feel great. I let my head loll back and closed my eyes, breathing deeply. Jack was the same height as me, so his hands reached easily up to my neck and around the back of my head, slightly ruffling my hair. "So I take it that's the feared cousin Snotlout." He said. I gave a small nod, "Unfortunately."

His hands continued their work down the first few inches of my spine and I tried to get myself to calm down further. "Well, don't they just sound like a barrel of fun." His voice was a sarcastic, monotone growl in my ear, which brought me back to the stables.

I found myself becoming overly aware of his hands on my shoulders and felt the heat spread across my ears. That was just grand. So much for looking tough, then. Behind us I heard the castle doors open. Earl Sand walked out, accompanied by two guards that held the doors open. I turned, unfortunately freeing Jack's hands. The white haired boy walked around me and gave an encouraging grin before heading over to assist the carriage driver with the horses. I turned my attention back to the lugheads that would soon be exiting the carriage while I straightened my tunic and hair where Jack had brushed through it. Maybe just maybe it wasn't a bad thing. It didn't feel bad, anyway. Honestly his presence had set up new sort of rolling in my stomach, but it was lighter than my previous nervousness. It was almost ticklish.

Before I had time to muse any further I was interrupted by Snotlout's loud stomping through the door of the carriage. "Ugh. Well look who's come to greet us." He said, jerking his chin towards me as the other two fought their way out of the carriage. "Hey there Horrendous. The face is still living up to the name, I see." He said, shooting me his disgustingly tooth-bared grin. I forced my lips to stay shut, fighting back every nasty insult and witty comeback in my arsenal. Even in situations like these, you had to be the better person. Plus I knew nothing good would come from fighting with Snotlout, he'd just end up resorting to violence and I didn't exactly need that either. Another plus, one day I'd end up as king and he'd have to beg on his knees for forgiveness if he wanted to keep his title. The thought brought a small smirk to my face as I turned to lead them inside. As soon as I was in the doors, I leaned over to the woman who used to be my mother's head maid, Geraldine. In a low voice I asked her if

everything breakable had been put away or hidden. She nodded, "They're being locked away right now." She said. A few more maids and butlers piled into the room, assumingly from the task of putting everything away.

I nodded at them in approval to which they bowed their heads and entered the long hall. There were awkwardly empty podiums and pedestals that would usually hold valuable busts and vases, but they had all been put away due the rowdy nature of Snotlout and the twins. They walked in not far behind me. It was more of a tumble, really, as they all pushed forward to be at the head of the group. Even my father had found their behavior unbecoming, and he was the easy parent. I coughed to clear my throat before leading them into one of the welcoming rooms that lined the hall. They followed behind me, still stuck on whatever they had been bickering about before. As I sat down at one of the tables I tried to keep as calm as I possibly could. Soon enough their attention would be dragged from their argument back to me, one of their favorite people to harass.

This was going to be another very long day.

* * *

><p>Whoopsie! Did the romance really come out that quick? That wasn't supposed to happen.

Not really, though. I meant to do that since Sugarplum won by a long shot. Unfortunately that means I have to get the romance rolling faster than I want it to, so it won't interfere with the plot. Ah, how unfortunate. So very, very unfortunate.

Anywhoo, next chapter out soon *hugs you all*

5. Chapter 5

Chapter 5

I was working in one of the East end gardens alone when there came the sound of a door opening and closing softly. I turned around to see prince Hiccup, his face ruddy and hair windblown. He was panting so I assumed he had been running. After catching a few quick breaths he pushed away from the door and jogged swiftly away towards one of the sheds, too preoccupied to take notice of me. I looked back at the door he had come through before hearing the raucous laughter from inside. Pinning that as the reason he had been running, I realized that maybe his previous nerves were slightly justified. I wondered what had him running away so fast and abandoned my work to go stalk out the shed. When I got there I found him "hiding" behind a few hay bales. Pushing away some of the straw I tapped his shoulder. He jumped up, screaming slightly before landing once again on the wall. "Woah there! Take it easy, it's just me." I told him, smiling at the small scream. The prince let out a huge sigh of relief before letting his head roll back to the wall behind him. "Sorryâ€¦ I thought you were one of them." He said. "Terrible trio's got you running, hm?" I walked over to sit down beside him. He nodded, "Yeah," I watched as he still worked to catch his breath. "I hate running."

I laughed, elbowing him in the side. "Not me. It feels like it's been ages since I sprinted. You run through enough forests with royal

guards on your tail, and you learn to love running. After a while, it's the only thing that feels safe. Honestly, it still feels strange to have been in one place this long." I told him. Now that he knew about my past anyway I had nothing to hide. He pulled his legs up to his chest and laid his head down on his arms. "Maybe you're right. But if you spend enough time in one place you get scared of going anywhere else." He said. I nodded, he had a point there. To each his own I guess. "Are you alright?" I asked, still curious. He nodded, "I'm fine it's justâ€¦ gods I could really use a drink." He said. I raised my eyebrows, "That bad, huh?" I asked. He chuckled softly, "Mm-hmm, they're all more than deserving of my name."

Just then there came a scream as someone ran out a side door of the castle. It was a woman's (that or a very effeminate man's) voice, and judging by the overly high pitchâ€¦ "Gods! Now they're after the girls?!" Hiccup complained in disbelief, dragging a hand down his face. He stood up, brushing away the straw from his clothes. I was surprised he could be so calm considering what had happened that morning in the stables. I'd had a bit more experience so it was easier to prepare myself, but Hiccup seemed almost as if he was too distracted to notice or had just forgotten completely. For some reason this brought out a childish possessiveness in me. Even though I knew it was for the best, I didn't want him to forget. I stood up beside him and put out a hand to stop him as he tried to leave. "Hmm? Is something wrong?" He asked, looking about himself like he had missed a piece of straw somewhere. I breathed a laugh, seeing an opening, "Here," I said, pulling myself closer to him and wrapping my arm around the back of his head. I twisted my fingers in his hair, pretending to fish something out. When I had succeeded in getting him to blush, I threw the invisible piece of straw somewhere behind him. I dragged my hand intentionally soft across his shoulder as I let my arm drop. "You're getting a bad habit of forgetting to check your hair." I told him, resisting the urge to wink.

He nodded quickly and looked away "T-Thank you. I'm, um, I'm probably late for supper though so I'll just... see you in the morning, then." He choked out. I gave him a smile, knowing full well what I had just done to the poor boy. "Alright, then. See you soon." I told him, already knowing that he would see me again before morning came. The little pocket in the back of my mind filled with potentially risky ideas had just provided me with the most wonderful thought...

* * *

><p>I had gotten dressed for bed a little earlier than usual, but the sun had already set. I walked across the long rug leading to my bed, stretching out my sore arms where too many "playful" punches had been lodged over the last few hours. My neck had gone stiff again despite Jack's small massage that morning. Just thinking about the way his hands felt made something inside me go warm, even though I didn't want to admit so. I took off my robe, letting it fall into a pile on the floor before crawling under the covers. The bed was warm and inviting after the hectic day filled with Snotlout and the twins. Somehow they had managed to break the corner off of a hefty wooden table in one of the common rooms. That would have to be taken away before anyone else arrived and replaced before anyone could take notice. Just how rough did you have to be to take off the corner of a three-inch-thick hardwood table with no sort of apparatus to aid in said destruction? I shook my head into the soft pillow, trying to chase the annoying thoughts of my cousin away. I let myself sink into

the bed, and closed my eyesâ€|<p>

â€|

Tink tink

â€|

Tink tink tink

â€|

Tink tink-ta-tink tink

Reluctantly pulling myself back from almost-sleep, I opened an eye to see what was causing the annoying tap. I yanked myself up into a half sitting position, and turned to look out the window. "Jack?!" I asked, before realizing I had somewhat yelled it. I covered my mouth with one hand, trying to make sense of it. Jack perched atop the stone bannister that outlined the balcony outside my room. I pushed off the blankets and slid out of bed, my feet hitting the rug before the cold wood. I had to fiddle with the lock on the delicate glass door before I was able to open it. I was greeted with a warm summer night breeze, a stark change to the interior of the mostly stone and marble castle. Jack smiled, "Miss me? I brought you a present." He said, lifting up a bag at his side. "Didn't think you'd want to wait until morning for it." I propped myself against the doorway in disbelief. "How did you get up here?" I asked. He grinned devilishly, "I'm a thief, remember? This kind of thing is my specialty." He answered, reclining further on the banister. "You're going to fall." I told him, coming over to his side. He waved a hand at me dismissively, "No I won't. I'm not a klutz like you."

I gasped in mock offense, "Me? A klutz?! Noooo." I said, leaning on the banister near where he sat. "Careful, little prince. We don't want you to fall off the edge now." He teased, knocking me playfully in the shoulder. I blew him off with a sigh and a wave of my hand. "So," I said, pushing his calf over the edge of the banister to where he was forced to step fully onto the balcony, "You brought me a present?" I asked, getting back to the original point. His mouth tilted up at the corners as he handed me the bag. It was heavier than I had thought it was going to be. I opened it to find a bottle of wine inside. Laughing, I pulled it out of the bag "So you brought me a drink." I said, remembering my comment in the shed. "Compliments of Miss Juliana." He said. "_Juliara._" I corrected him. "You'd better get it through you head too or she'll throw you to hell and back for getting it wrong." I told him. He rolled his eyes, "Juliana, Juliara, Julianne, Just plain Julieâ€| I don't see much of a difference." He said. I tilted my head, "Very true, just like Jack and Jacques and Jokul." I teased. "That'sâ€|" He began, but I interrupted, "I don't see much of a difference." He pouted at having to eat his words, "Oh, come off it."

I laughed once more, but gestured towards my room. "I've got a few glasses in my room, we'll use those." I told him, walking back inside. "And here I was wanting to go straight from the bottle." He said. I rolled my eyes, "Now I've gone and done it. Inviting an uncivilized ruffian into my room for a glass of wine he swindled out of my maid, positively shameful." I said, shaking my head in fake disapproval. I picked up two glasses left in a cabinet reserved for

such purposes and walked back to where Jack had planted himself on my bed. Pouring each of us a glass, I held mine up to his, making a small clinking noise. "Cheers." I said, raising my glass a little before taking a sip. "Cheers, then. To what are we cheering?" The asked.

"To the existence of alcohol." I said with a smile, which he then mirrored. "Very well, then. I'll drink to that. Cheers." He said, taking his own sip. After the first glass we had both moved on to another, and I felt some of my limitations rub off as the wine settled in. We talked about many of the same things we had before. He told me some more of his stories from abroad, while I spoke about politics and noisy royals. Once again I found myself in hysterics over the story of the chicken that had landed him in the dungeon. I was finished after the second glass, knowing my low limits. We sat our glasses down on the bedside table before reclining back on the bed again. I looked over to Jack, who had been uncharacteristically quiet for a few moments to find him staring back at me already. "Is here something in my hair again?" I asked, trying to break through the silence. He smirked, "Yes, actually. There's a feather." He informed me, reaching over to pull it out, his fingers twisting into my hair.

He was taking a while.

"Is it just stuck in there?" I asked, wondering what was taking him so long. He paused, looking directly at me, "No. I got the feather out a while ago." He said. It took a second for the words to seep in, but as my understanding floated to the surface, Jack was already leaning in. I didn't question it this time, bringing one hand up to his shoulder. His lips tasted like wine and he smelled like the gardens below. They were moist from how he'd lightly licked them before pressing them into mine. One of his hands found a place on my hip while the other, still tangled in my hair, pulled me forward. I slid my hand up from his shoulder to the base of his neck. The hand that had been rested on my hip then made its way teasingly upward, as if pressing its luck, before reaching all the way to my cheek.

I breathed into the kiss, and with aid from the alcohol, slid myself closer to him. Jack had been gentle up to that point, but suddenly his lips came on stronger, needy and hungry. Soft noises filled the bedroom, echoing back to us as we made more. How? How could this possibly be a bad thing? I laughed off all my earlier fears by bringing his lips to mine again and again. It was a good thing. Definitely. Jack's hands roamed around, feeling my sides and back, rubbing the same soothing circles in more intimate places. I brought both my hands to rest around his shoulders. He gave me a small rest, settling for a few kisses on my neck, cheeks, and shoulders. Still, there was one more thing that bothered me. Unwillingly, I pushed Jack away. He pulled back from me with a lady-killer crooked smile, "Had enough already? What's wrong?" He asked, ever in tune with my emotions. He knew just how to play with them, didn't he? "Nothing's wrong really, I'm just confused. How does this work?" I asked, not really sure how to phrase the question in my mind.

One of Jack's hands slipped down into mine and held tight, like I might blow away in the breeze if he let go. "We?" He copied, and you could tell he relished the word. "We," He said, "are whatever you want us to be." I smiled, but the thing was, I didn't really know what I wanted. He seemed more I touch with his own thoughts, so I

wanted him to choose. "What do you want us to be?" I asked, bringing our hands up to play with his fingers laced in mine. "What should I do?" I questioned again when he remained unresponsive. Finally he looked up from our hands and smiled up at me. "Simple," He whispered, "Say you'll be my lover."

* * *

><p>The shading of Hiccup's face went from pink to deep red as my words sunk in. To further prove my point, I brought our hands up together, fingers still intertwined, to kiss the back of his. Honestly, I couldn't believe the words had come out so smoothly with my stomach in so many knots. They only twisted more the longer he took to answer. I looked back at his eyes after what seemed like eternity to find him looking at our hands. Weighing the pros and cons, I was happy that he was giving it such careful thought, but nervous by how hard he made the decision seem. His eyes closed.<p>

Without any warning, he let my hand go.

My stomach dropped to my knees. Maybe it really was impossible. I didn't want to hear the words come out of his mouth. Just two seconds ago he had been happy and smiling into the kiss... but I guess his own happiness wasn't the only thing he had to consider. He was a prince after all, and princes weren't allowed to have male lovers. I could feel my face falling, and tried desperately to hold it up. Had he been born into any other family it would be alright. He could say yesâ€| but would he even want to?

My thoughts were racing faster than I could keep up with them. I tried to keep myself focused on Hiccup, on the way his face looked, thinking that after rejecting me I might not get to see him much. My hand felt cold, so I slid it back to my side. I could tell he felt awkward just sitting there. He didn't know how to say it. I pushed off the bed and stood up. "â€|Alright." I whispered gently, not wanting to give away the storm of emotions inside of me. I took a deep breath, and somehow found the strength to turn away. Each step through the door took an eternity, a slow ache ripping apart my chest each time. I was good at good-byes. Never in the past did I get too attached to anyone because I knew that I'd eventually have to leaveâ€| but I thought maybe this time would be different.

I swung my legs over the banister, trying to find the loose brick I had used as a foothold on my way up. Behind me I heard the blankets rustling. I assumed Hiccup was just going to go back to sleep if he could. Finding the brick, I stepped off the edge of the balcony and turned around.

"G-Gahh! What? What are you doing there?!" I yelled, before realizing it was the middle of the night and I was being loud. Hiccup was standing right in front of me, even though I hadn't heard his approach from behind. His eyes widened innocently and he laughed quietly. My eyebrows knotted. Just what, exactly, did he find funny? He had just rejected me for gods' sake! Hiccup noticed my sudden change in mood and shook his head, a gentle smile on his lips. "You're a strange one, aren't you?" He asked. I let my frown sink a little lower in confusion, "What?"

I crossed my arms across the banister, still using it for support.

Hiccup walked a few steps closer, putting barely a foot between us anymore. "Honestly, what are you thinking storming off like that? You're the one who asked." He said. In my disbelief I let out an angry puff of air. "Well sorry I don't take rejection well." I said, annoyed by his refusal to understand that it might put someone in a bad mood.

Now it was Hiccup's turn to look confused. "What rejection? When did I say no?"

What? I had to stand there and just blink for a moment. My mouth opened and closed a few times, trying to find the right words, but I just came up blank. Did he just say heâ€¦? But surely that meantâ€¦? Wait, had heâ€¦? "C-Come again?" I asked finally, no longer sure of the situation. Hiccup's eyes seemed to realize something, and he took another short laugh. "You thought that pause was my answer?" He asked, He ruffling his hair, a large grin spreading over his face before he leaned in. "Jack, that wasn't a rejection." He said, before placing a hand on my cheek. "I wasâ€¦ waiting for you to kiss me."

â€¦

Well.

Messed that one up.

"So, your answerâ€¦?" I asked, still unsure about where we stood. He still hadn't given me a clear yea or nay. Hiccup's hand brushed through my hair once before he placed his forehead to mine. "That would be a yes." He said, eyes crinkling at the corners from his smile. I let out a sigh, feeling the release of the pain around my heart. I lifted one of my hands to the back of his neck, laughing quietly at my own misunderstanding before pulling him closeâ€¦

* * *

><p>I woke up to the sound of a loud banging in the hallway.<p>

My body acted on instinct and previous experience. It jumped out of bed, ran to the balcony door (still unlocked from the night before) and hid behind a thick potted shrub. Not a second after I had gotten settled, I heard the loud bang as my door was forced open.

"Hoooooreennnndous! We decided to do your little maids a favor and wake you up for them inste-? Oi! Where'd he go?!" Snotlout's voice echoed in my room, even through the glass door. Despite myself, I shook. The door was closed behind meâ€¦ but if they really decided to go poking aroundâ€¦

"Horredous! Such a loud voice at this hour-! Ohâ€¦ of course that would be you, Snotloutâ€¦" The voice came drifting down like a blessing and a curse at the same time. It had freed me for the moment, but would haunt me later. It was Pitch's voice, and from the sound of it, his mood was already sour. "What are you doing waving about a hammer in the prince's chamber? Get out. Honestly, my brother taught you nothing about manners." He hissed. With that, the three sets of footsteps left. I heard the click of Pitch's hard shoes on my wood floor for a few minutes before they too receded. Letting go of the breath I had been holding, my back pressed into the cool stone of the castle wall. When I had made sure to lock the door, I changed

quickly and rushed downstairs.

Not in the mood to face Pitch yet, I ran out a servant's entrance outside. There was, however, one face I did want to see—very much. Green blurred around me as I pushed through the woods behind the stables. He had said to go this direction, but there was no sign of him. "Jack!" I called, pausing for a moment before trying again, "Ja-ack? Where are you?" I poked my head around some trees, but there was nothing behind them. I blew out a sigh, maybe he just wasn't there yet. The sounds of birds and wind were the only thing I could hear. It was pleasant, actually. A nice change from the previous racket. Then there came the snap of a twig behind me. "Jack? Is that—urgh!"

I didn't know what was happening. Suddenly there was a piece of cloth around my eyes, and both of my hands were pinned behind my back. "Wha-!" I was pushed into a tree and suddenly all of the pieces fell into place— This was definitely not Jack. "Help!" I called, squirming against the person who held me down. "Jack!" I tried, maybe he would be close enough to hear me by then—

The person who held me down gave a dark chuckle and twisted me upwards so I was sitting against a tree. I was about to call for help again, but then there was suddenly something stopping my lips. Oh gods, what? They were kissing me, whoever it was— I pressed my lips into a tight line, fighting it. "Mmmrrph! Get—nnck!...Get off!" I cried, twisting my head to the side as best as I could. My captor once again gave a small laugh, but before I had time to prepare for whatever they might do next, the blindfold was ripped from my eyes, leaving them stinging in the sudden sunlight.

"You called for help, your highness?" Sounded a familiar voice.

I flipped my head around to see that the person who had attacked me was none other than Jack Frost. "You— You are an ass!" I spat at him, trying to push him away. He let me go, hands held up in surrender. "Alright, alright! I'm sorry I scared you." He said, but his obvious smirk said otherwise. "Sure you are." I said, standing up to brush the dirt off of myself. I turned my back to him, a childish response, yes, but I didn't want to look at him. I heard the crunch of the leaves below as he stood up as well. My arms were pinned around my chest, but there was another set of hands that immediately wrapped themselves around my waist. "Aw come on Hic, it was just a joke— forgive me? Please?" His warm voice flowed into my ear as whisper, and that was all it took to make me melt. "Fine— but you'd better not do it again." I told him, twisting around so could see his face and wrap my arms around his neck. His smirk tilted up into a genuine smile. "No promises—" He said, pressing a small kiss to the tip of my nose. I frowned, but said nothing further.

"You still have bed-head." He said, reaching up to smooth some of my hair. I hadn't even thought of combing my hair in my haste to get away from Snotlout and out of the castle. "I was a bit rushed this morning." I told him. "Just couldn't wait to see me?" He guessed, cocky. "No." I told him. But corrected, "Well, _yes_— but that wasn't the reason I was rushed."

I explained to him the situation with Snotlout his morning, and how I really didn't want to go back. "Then don't." He said, "Just spend the day with me." He proposed, leaning his forehead into mine and

twisting our fingers together. I hugged him and laid my head on his shoulder. "I want to, believe me. I just have this other thing I have to do called being a prince." I told him, laughing a little. He chuckled, "Oh, what am I going to do? Now I'm going to be forced to share my lover with the entire kingdom." He said, blowing some hair out of his face. I smiled, "Don't worry, I'll save some just for you." He grinned and guided my chin towards his, giving me a small peck. "Good thing. Because thieves are greedy, you know." I wrapped my arms a little tighter around his waist, "I'm glad."

Once again, our moment was soon smashed to pieces by the distant cries of the girls. "Ah— I'm being summoned again." Jack wrapped his arms around my shoulders, pinning my arms to my side. "Noooo. You're not allowed to go yet. As soon as you leave, I have to meet the wrath of Aster and the rose gardens." He complained. I rolled my eyes, "Oh really? Well I'd take the rosebushes any day over the next twelve hours with Snotlout, the twins, and Pitch." I told him, to which he cringed. "Are you suuuuure you can't just stay with me instead?" He asked. I shook my head and pulled away from him. "Stop that, or I won't be able to make myself go." I told him, walking past him back towards the castle. Unexpectedly, though, I was dragged back to him by the tail of my coat. "Aren't you forgetting something?" He pointed out, like he knew something I didn't. "Am I?" I asked, knowing I hadn't brought anything along. He shook his head, "Ah, you really are hopeless." He said, pulling me in for a deep kiss. Finally I had to break away. "D-Don't do that so early in the morning," I told him, "or I'll end up thinking about it all day!"

He laughed, but waved good-bye as I left. The girls had almost made it to the stables when Snotlout came clomping towards them, "Morning, ladies! Those dresses are looking awfully low— lovely! I meant to say lovey I mean um— hey look at my facial hair! Isn't it the manliest thing you've ever seen?" He asked. The girls cringed, taking a few collective steps back in a huddle. I walked out from the forest, acting like I'd been in the stables the whole time. "Snotlout really, you have no way with women, do you?" I asked him, letting my presence be known with some unknown courage. The girls all practically swooned when they saw me, "Oh, Prince Horrendous!" "I'm so glad we found you—" "Shall we go back inside?" They squealed, all conveying one hidden desire to escape. "Oh, is breakfast ready? Then by all means, let's hurry before it gets cold." I told them.

I was about to join them when suddenly there was a grip on my wrist. "Makin' fun of me, are yah?!" Snotlout roared, throwing me around to face him and raising his fist, about to punch me. My heart was beating out of my chest, and I was scared, but I was also smart. "Snotlout!" I yelled, trying to put as much anger and force into my voice as I possibly could. "That's enough. Are you really going to raise your fist in front of an innocent group of women?! Honestly— How immature." I said. I was surprised at how my voice didn't even crack. As if to prove my point, the girls all gave small, scared shrieks behind us. Snotlout, in his never-ending attempt to figure out the opposite sex, let me go. I repressed a sigh of relief, but before I could turn back to the girls, he was already threatening me, "You best watch your step today, Haddock." He growled, before releasing my wrist and stalking back across the lawn.

"Prince Horrendous!" "Oh my, how brave!" "Really, you saved us!" The girls said, running to fawn over me. "Oh, um. It was— It was nothing." I said, fighting back a blush. They wouldn't stop talking

about it all the way until we walked into the dining room, where one look from Geraldine told them to hush up and disperse. I found the way to my plate, already set with breakfast. I was accompanied to the table by Earl Sand, who wrote down all of the arrivals we were expecting that day on a piece of paper. Ugh. So many people. At least that would keep me busy enough that Snotlout would have to keep out of my hair. As soon as I had finished breakfast, the first of them had arrived. I straightened myself up and went to go meet them.

Unlike last time, this carriage was a pleasant surprise. "Earl Sand, Did Saint North and Toothiana say they would be coming?" I asked him. He shook his head no, and ran inside to finish business. They wasted no time getting out of the carriage, and at first sight I was shown a head full of beautiful multi-colored hair. "Horrendous!" The young girl called, a large smile on her face "Well if it isn't Baby Tooth!" I greeted, holding my arms out as she ran to hug me. "I missed you!" She said, hugging tightly around my waist. "Baby Tooth! Mind your manners!" Came a gentle voice from the carriage door. "Welcome, Toothiana!" I said, watching as a gorgeous bright blue gown poured forth from the carriage. "Oh Horrendous!" she said, and before I knew what was happening, there were tears running down her face. Well, it was to be expected, she was one of my mother's closest friends, after all. "Horrendous! Is good to see smiling face again!" North said, following behind Toothiana. "Same to you, Saint North. How have you been?" I asked, walking up to be pulled into one of his tight hugs. "Good! Very good! My daughter!" she's sixteen. She's grown since last time, no?" He asked. I nodded. "Yes, she gets prettier each time I see her." I said. North nodded in agreement while Baby Tooth blushed, looking away, "Th-thank you!"

The day passed by quickly with the company of Toothiana, North, and Baby Tooth. They weren't related to me, but I wished they were. I always enjoyed whenever they visited, which was often due to my mother's friendship with Toothiana. I hoped they wouldn't stop coming because she was gone. Before I knew it, the day had completely passed and dinner was over. In total, I had welcomed forty guests that day. I was exhausted, and as I went for my room, all I could think about was my warm, soft bed. I was just about to get changed when I remembered that morning with Jack. It brought a smile to my face when I thought about doing it again the next day and the day after that. But then I remembered Snotlout's threat from that morning. He hadn't done anything so far but Snotlout wasn't the type to just let things go. I pondered what I should do as my room became increasingly less inviting. I knew what I wanted to do.

I got changed and flew down the hallways with the soft slapping of my feet over wood and stone. Soon, I came to the assistants' quarters. They were dimly lit with only a few candles left. Almost everyone had gone to bed, so it was hard to find my way, but eventually I came across the one I thought must be his. I knocked on the door lightly, wondering if he'd already gone to bed. "Ah! Be there in a moment." He said. There was some rustling and then his soft footsteps as he approached the door. When he opened it, orange light from the candle poured out into the hallway. He wasn't wearing a shirt, only his usual brown trousers that hung loosely from his waist. "Hiccup? What are you doing here now? Come in, come in." He said, waving me forward and checking around to make sure no one had seen me. When he turned around once more he asked me what was going on. I told him about the situation with Snotlout and how I didn't think my room was safe that

night and I didn't know what else to do so I came to him.

When my explanation was over, Jack just smiled softly, "Well, I guess you can stay with me tonight. My bed is small, and I'm sure it's not as comfy as what you're used to, butâ€¦ I guess that's better than having your head beat-in." He said. I was glad he didn't call me out for my cowardice, because I was already ashamed of it enough, but the truth was, I wouldn't be able to win in a fight against Snotlout. Hell, I wouldn't be able to win in any fight. I accepted his offer, thanking him profusely. Jack yawned and stretched, and when he did, I noticed scores of fresh new scrapes and cuts on his arms. "Jack?! What happened to you?! Gods, that looks painfulâ€¦" I said, instinctively taking one of his arms in my hands to get a better look. Jack chuckled slightly at my reaction, and patted my hair to calm me down, "Today was the rose gardens, remember?" He said. I pouted, "You really shouldn't hurt yourself this bad over flowers. It must feel terribleâ€¦" I said. Jack tilted his head to the side, "It's worth it, thoughâ€¦ That's your favorite garden, right?"

I looked up at him, still not letting go of his arm. "â€¦You noticed?" I asked, not denying it. He nodded. I looked down at his arm again, before making up some excuse about having to use the bathroom. I slipped away towards the kitchen, where I knew I'd find something to help him. I mixed up a small ointment that I had learned to make from North years ago when I was somehow an even clumsier person. Walking back to the room, I found Jack lounging on the bed this time. "Come over here." I said, sitting on the side of the bed. "Give me your armâ€¦ this might sting a little. " I told him, before rubbing a small layer to the skin of his forearm. If it did sting, he didn't show it. He sat cool and composed the entire time. It took the whole batch to cover the entirety of his cuts, and in the end he smelled of pine and mint. It was a nice smell I secretly couldn't help but sniff at. When it was done, Jack thanked me with a kiss on the top of my head. I put the small dish that had held the ointment on a small table in the corner of the room. "Well, then. Now that that's taken care ofâ€¦" He said, crawling underneath the covers. He lifted them up just a bit again, inviting me in, "Come join me?"

With nervous flutters in my stomach, I climbed in beside him, simultaneously blowing out the candle. I huddled up close, not wanting to fall off the edge. "Is it too crowded?" He asked. I could hear the concern in his low voice. I guess since I was a prince he thought it must have been terrible to have to sleep in such a tight space. Honestly, though, it felt better than my own large and lonely bed. "No," I told him, pressing my feet against his underneath the blanket. "It's warm." I said, pulling my head into his chest. He laughed softly and wrapped an arm around my shoulder, "Reallyâ€¦ You are a tease." He said. In my sleepy drunk state I didn't realize what he meant and wouldn't get it until days later. "I'm sorry?" I asked, wrapping my own arm around him. He moved closer and lifted my chin up to where it was level with his. "Today must've been tiringâ€¦ Don't I even get a good-night kiss?" He asked. Even though the room was dark I was sure he could he could practically hear the blush the painted my cheeks. "Alright." I said, pushing my lips up to his. It was quick, yet warm, and soft. I was satisfied with it, but apparently Jack was not.

He kissed me againâ€¦ and againâ€¦ until once again he had made me lose count. I didn't think I'd ever tire of it. Kissing Jack was

quickly becoming my favorite pastime. "Mmnâ€¦ Jack?" I asked as suddenly his lips picked up a furious pace, leaving me behind. His hand travelled up and down my spine, leaving a fever wherever his hands brushed. My mind reeled, and I leaned willfully into him. One of his hands moved to my hair and pulled me in from there. Without warning, he pushed away. I unknowingly pouted, angry that he thought it was a perfectly fine to leave it that way. He really could have at least de-escalated some. Jack's hand moved the side of my face, and I turned to press my lips to his thumb. "Hiccup." Jack said, his voice still close from where we had leaned in. "Mmhmm?" I hummed, now completely awake. "Open your mouth." He said. I could hear the smirk in his voice and wondered what he was planning, but opened it slightly anyway.

Something warm slid inside as Jack began to kiss me again. It felt different from any other previous kiss, and had I been standing up, I wouldn't have been able to keep my balance. "Mm!...Haa Ah!" I couldn't hold back my voice as Jack's lips collided with mine, our tongues dancing together. "J-Jack?!" Suddenly his hands had moved lower, down to my hips and upper thighâ€¦ and there. We were already loud, with sounds surely seeping through the walls into the hallway. "Jackâ€¦S-stopâ€¦Someone m-might Un!... S-someone might h-hearâ€¦" I breathed out. Jack didn't seem to have thought about that, because his hands immediately stopped. I was half relieved and half disappointed. His voice came as a whisper the next time he spoke, "â€¦Sorry. Here, let's go to sleep."

He wrapped his arms around me one more time, and I curled into him. With that, we both drifted into a long, deep sleep.

* * *

><p>When I woke up in the morning, Hiccup had already left. I guessed it was because he didn't want any of the other servants to see him come out of my room. I woke up later than most of the kitchen staff and maids, who had to prepare early for the day ahead. As soon as I walked into the kitchen it had already begun. "Had fun last night, did we?" "How'd you manage to sneak a girl past the guards?" "Hear now, what if he won over one of the maids and didn't have to sneak her?" The chefs and butlers teased while the girls blushed and giggled in the corners. "Keep trying but you'll never guess." I told them. At this they all seemed to take intrigue. "Surely you didn't grab one of the guests?" They asked. I shrugged my shoulders. "No, all of 'em are too uptight to have a fling with a servant boy. It had to be someone here." They said. Once again, I shrugged my shoulders, a smirk on my face. "Well, whoever she was, she had a lovely voice, didn't she?" Someone said, elbowing me in the ribs. I turned around to see who it was.<p>

Lo and behold, there stood Aster.

"Ahâ€¦haha. Right?" I said, looking away. Suddenly I was plagued with guilt over snogging his son. Aster cocked his eyebrow in confusion at my strange response, but he must've thought it was just because of my embarrassment as he told me what we'd be working on that day after I got finished with the horses. I grabbed an apple from the table as well as a piece of toast. It was a chilly morning due to the rain last night, so I put on a light cloak and headed out the door. I walked through the courtyard grass to the stables, and made sure to finish my work quickly so I could join Hiccup in the woods. When I

arrived, the sun was still barely risen, so he should've been there soon. I would have pranked him, but I figured that it would only make him angry after the previous day's "promise." I sat down at the foot of the tree we had met under earlier and finished my breakfast.

The sun rose higher and higher, but Hiccup still hadn't come. By that point, Aster would be livid if I wasn't done with the stables. With a sigh, I decided that he must've gotten caught up in something and trudged back through the woods. I found the girls calling for him not too far off. Thinking it strange, I approached them. "Oh look! It's Jack!" "Good-morning, Jack. Have you seen the prince?" "We can't find him anywhere! Honestlyâ€¦" Well if they didn't know and neither did I, he really must've been hiding well. I wondered what he was doing, but somewhere in the pit of my stomach I knew something wasn't quite right. After telling them that no, I didn't know where he was, they released me and went back to their search. I found Aster in the azalea garden, trimming some of the bushes back. He scolded me for being late and I got to work.

The day passed slowly as we worked under the sun. My arms felt better from the ointment Hiccup had put on them and they still smelled faintly of mint. The scent mixed with that of the flowers and damp Earth, and though it was a nice smell, it didn't ease my worry. What was he up to? If even the girls didn't knowâ€¦

"Aster! Oh thank god I've found youâ€¦" Geraldine ran into the garden in a hurried and scared state, panting slightly from her run. "Have you seen Prince Horrendous today? Do you know where he is?" She asked, clinging to the fabric of her dress. Aster shook his head, as did I, and she seemed to panic further. "Oh noâ€¦ this really isn't goodâ€¦" She said. Just as she did, a guard ran up on horse. "Geraldine! We've found something. Back in the woods near the stablesâ€¦ They found his cloak. We thinkâ€¦" And here he paused. Geraldine looked confused, and picked up her skirts as she jogged up a bit closer to meet him. "What?" She asked, dread slowly creeping into her features. The guard had on a troubled expression as he steadied the horse he was on.

"We think the prince has been taken."

* * *

><p>L000000000ONG UPDATE

Hello. I'm sorry I didn't get this up during the weekend, but it was impossible because MY INTERNETS DECIDED TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

_Also, updates for the next two weeks might be late or irregular or maybe pregnant because I'll be on holiday in Italy
*squeals*_

ANYWHOOO...

Sexually frustrated Jack is my favorite Jack. Let's play with him more often ;)

6. Chapter 6

Chapter 6

Needless to say, being kidnapped was not how I pictured my first time out of the castle. The horse was terribly irritable and liked to buck about. I was sure that the vagabond to whom I was held captive did not actually own the horse, or it would've responded better to his choppy commands. There was a small band of men, actually. The two who rode close behind us looked like red-headed brothers. The man I was attached to rode in front of the triangle, and you could tell he was of no blood relation to the other two. I tried my best to keep from touching him on the unstable horse. My mouth had dried out long ago due to the strip of cloth they had used to gag me.

I kept re-living that moment in the woods...

I'd been waiting for Jack to wake up, quite sure it would take a while, and I wanted to be out before him (especially after all the noise of the night previous). No doubt someone would speak to him about it, and I hoped he knew better than to say it was me... but even if he didn't, no one would believe him. I bit my lip in excitement as the memory of last night awoke fresh in my mind. It seemed like I would never get over how natural it had felt, and how we had fit together so perfectlyâ€¦ or the closeness. It was all more like a pleasant dream.

The leaves rustled above me as the sun began to show its first hints of rising. By then Jack would definitely be up and getting ready. It was almost like a perfect replay of the day before, only this time I was waiting on Jack, not the other way around. At least this time I wouldn't have to worry about him popping out to scare me again. I sat under the tree we had met under earlier and listened to the birds as the morning came. When I felt a blindfold fall over my eyes I was amazed at how quick Jack had woken up. With a small screech I jumped at the sudden contact. "Jaaaa-ck! I thought you promised!" I groaned, waiting for Jack's usual chuckle as my cheeks warmed.

"I don't know who this Jack is, but if he's got you used to blindfoldsâ€¦ Huh. Who knew we were dealing with such an _experienced_ prince."

Then I found myself in such a situation, riding to some unknown land with three unknown thieves. Before long, we came across a meadow in the middle of the forest with some cliffs lining its edge. I was lifted from the horse and dragged into the cave where they covered the entrance with some vines. "Oi, so what are we gonna do about 'im now that we've done the job, Rider?" One of the brothers asked. "Relaxâ€¦ I've got this all planned out. The way I'm thinking, it would be a waste to kill him, right? I mean, he's obviously educated, being a prince and all. That alone would make him pretty easy to sell as a slave or somesuch, but there's also theâ€¦ _market_. He's got a nice, untouched face. That'll get us a pretty penny or two apart from what we've already made off Pitch. So it's really up to you guys from there, then onto the next job." Said the one with brown hair. His words sent shivers down my spine. Pitch? Slave? Market?

Iâ€¦ wanted Jack.

* * *

><p>The castle was in a panic as the news flew around about what had happened to the prince. Aster looked more out of sorts than I had

ever seen him before. The girls were absolutely beside themselves as they flitted about, trying unsuccessfully to be helpful. The king was in an uproar, using up all the air to yell at everyone in his worry. Even Snotlout lookedâ€¦ well, no. Snotlout looked almostâ€¦ pleased? But that was to be expected. I could do nothing but stand speechless, with my stomach in my knees, trying to keep calm. My nails dug into the palms of my hands, drawing blood, but I couldn't feel it. The knights were all running around, preparing to leave in search.<p>

Without my noticing it, Aster and I were back in the noise-filled servant's quarters. When the flow of people suddenly slowed, Aster gripped my arm, pulling me up off the small bench we perched on. "Ouch! Aster!?" I cried as he suddenly dragged me through the corridor until we had reached his room. Without warning, he pulled me in and slammed the door behind him. Then he flipped around and stared at where I had fallen unceremoniously to the floor. Looking me over, he finally gave me a stern glance, "I know. Aboutâ€¦ you two."

In my confused state, I could do nothing but blink back up at him. "Yahâ€¦ yah probably know more about the paths of thieves and such than those bumble-brained nitwits they got as knights these daysâ€¦ and I know yah wanna find him twice as much as any of 'em. So I'll askâ€¦ are yah ready to break the law to save him?"

I took me a minute to digest it. Aster knew. About us â€¦and he was okay with itâ€¦ enough to send me after him, anyway.

"How?" I asked, accepting his offer. Aster nodded his head, then turned around to a chest at his bedside. Inside was a full knight's outfit. It would be a little big on me, but I knew what Aster's plan was the moment I saw it. I would have to fake my station in order to follow the knights around and hear any news of where Hiccup might be, but that would be simple enough. "How well do the knights know each other around here?" I asked, wondering just how low I would have to keep my head in order to blend in. "Some of 'em act like strangers to one anothah, so unless yah do somethin' really stupid, yah should be able to follow 'em pretty good." Aster laid out each of the pieces on his bed and double-checked to make sure everything was there. "The design hasn't changed much since I was ridin' with 'em, so they probably won't realize it's a bit oldâ€¦ but if they do, just tell 'em that your usual getup needed repairs after a fight or somethin'." I nodded, and Aster crossed to the door. "They've already set out, but one or two people showin' up late isn't an abnormal thing. Still, yah don't wanna lose their tracks." I raised an eyebrow at him. "Well, I'll get as far as I can by foot but eventually I'm going to need a horse... Anyone in town you've got a grudge against?" I asked him. Aster grinned a lopsided smile, but shook his head, "Nah, not really, but it doesn't really mattah since you'll be taking Toothless." With that said, he left the room.

I sighed. I sort of felt guilty for wanting to steal a horse. It had been at least three months since I'd been outside the castle walls, and the idea of getting out (and doing something illegal) had my blood pumping with excitement. It felt so good to take matters into my own hands as I donned each piece of the uniform. It was a little bit big, as I feared, but not too conspicuous. I already had some experience with faking my station back in the country of Nerk when I'd pretended to be a duke in order to sneak into a party of the highest regard. Fortunately, I was only found out after I was within

running distance of an easily stolen horse. I had sold the clothes and the silverware from the party for much too high of a price to an easily tricked merchant afterward before fleeing the country on that same horse. I knew better than to sell away this armor, however. Who knew Aster had been a knight? More importantly, what had happened for him to go from a knight to a servant?

When the hall seemed quiet enough, I slipped outside towards the stables. Toothless was looking irritated without his morning run, whinnying and flipping his hair in every direction. I calmed him by bringing a small apple. "Think you can run me fast enough to catch a stolen prince?" I asked him, a mischievous grin on my face. Toothless sputtered, kicking impatiently at his gate. "Ok, then. I'll take that as a yes." I flung the gate open, quickly throwing a saddle onto my hairy companion before mounting him and taking off towards the gate. Seeing my uniform, the guards let me through without a second glance. Looking to my left, I saw Aster waving to my lightly from behind some trees he was trimming. I nodded and disappeared through the gate. It felt as if I were a bird being released from a cage. I took a deep breath and began to gallop through the castle city.

It didn't take much to catch up with a rather large group of knights. I slipped in between them quietly, as if I'd been there the whole time, and none of them seemed to notice. By listening to the ends of their conversations, they believed the kidnappers would've taken him north. I shook my head. North? Were they stupid? No one in their right mind would ever think about taking a prisoner up the North Mountains. Those paths were too heavily guarded, even in the woods. And on top of that, the temperature was already dropping quickly as fall set in. Winter would be in full force by the time you could get halfway across the full range of them. North? Absolutely not. They went south.

Everyone was scared that Hiccup might already be dead, but quite honestly, his being alive was the only the thing I was absolutely sure about. You don't steal a prince to kill him. It's a waste. Nobles are worth much more to you alive than they are dead, and when you have a high prince on your hands, there's about three different directions you can go. One, you hold him hostage until something you want done happens. Two, you act on orders from whoever's paying you and deposit him where they say to collect your money. Three, (and I found myself cringing at he thought) you sell him off as a slave or concubine to another rich noble with a grudge against the king. I hated to admit it, but three was the most likely scenario (seeing as how it paid the best of all). Keeping that in mind, I broke off from the group as soon as they began heading for the North Mountains. I turned in the opposite direction, towards the woods and hill-strewn plains to the south. I knew them well at this point. It would be my third trip through them, and I had a great memory for these types of things. I stuck to the road for a while before going into the woods. They'd want to stick close to the rock cliffs bordering the eastern mountain. I headed in the cliffs' direction, paying attention to the sun as it drifted from noon into early evening.

* * *

><p>After the trio had their lunch, we set back off through the woods. We never left the side of the cliffs until we were over the border and into our closest neighboring country of Serk. My clothes had been sold off during our second day of travel and replaced with

rough and raggedy robes so I would fit in when we'd pass through towns. Once or twice I heard them speaking about possible buyers for me. During these conversations I would have to try and block out everything they said so as to keep my sanity. One day, a town crier had yelled out the news of my disappearance. At least there was some hope since they believed I was still alive. Each night, we would retreat back to what they would deem a safe place in the woods and each day I grew more afraid of them finding a "buyer" that suited them. I lost a lot of weight during those few days, mainly because I was too riled up or too scared to even think of food.<p>

We stopped to rest for the night in a small cave near the side of yet another new mountain. As of that day, we had been travelling for exactly one week. I was more tired than I'd ever been in my entire life. Emotionally and physically drained, I wondered how Jack could ever like this sort of life. Ohâ€|

The thought of Jack sent the stinging of tears to the back of my eyes. I missed him greatly, longing for him more than I'd ever longed for anything else. I didn't even pine for home and my own bed as much as I did for him. Would I ever see him again? The trio were already sawing logs with me tied tightly to a tree. Under the cover of the night and the dying fire, I brought my legs up to my face and silently let a few tears out. The knights would never come searching that far out. I knew so, and it did nothing but deepen my despair. What if I never even saw my own country again?

I was forced out of my thoughts by a loud snore from the brown-haired thiefâ€| Rider is what the red-haired brothers called him. I dried my eyes as best as I could on the scratchy fabric of my trousers before leaning my head on the tree to get some rest. I immediately entered a nightmare and drifted in and out of sleep repetitively as the night passed. I was awoken once or twice by the loud snoring of Rider. The coming of morning woke me once more as the birds began to chirp under a still-dark sky, but I refused to open my eyes. The night really should've be longer than thatâ€| I drifted off silently one more time, where I was greeted by a dream of Jack.

We were running through the woods, green rushing past us as we sprinted away from something far behind. I felt scared, but not terrified. As I looked up, Jack had his smug grin on. "I knew I'd find you. Good thing I went south, huh?" He said. I smiled hugely back up at him. "Let's go home." He coaxed, the words wrapping around me like a warm blanket as we ran. "Hiccup." He said, and I focused on a light at the end of the woods, and I knew it was our exit. "Hiccup." He said again. "Hmm?" I asked, still not taking my eye off of the light. "Hiccupâ€| you need to wake up." I looked up to see Jack's face, now distressed and darkening.

"Hiccupâ€| Hiccup, I need you to wake upâ€| Hic?"

The dream faded away into the quickly approaching morning. As it did so, my heart broke a little more. Why Jack? The dream had given me false hope for rescue. I sighed and opened my eyes, silently cursing the sun for rising. "Rise and shine, princess."

Jack.

I flipped my head to the right so quick it gave me whiplash and opened my mouth to gasp, but it was quickly covered by a familiar,

warm hand. "Miss me?" Jack asked, his eyes alight in shimmering blue. I nodded my head up and down furiously, adding to the whiplash. Jack laughed quietly before whispering, "That's good. Me too." There was a small slicing sound, and the rope that tied me to the tree came undone. I couldn't throw it off of me fast enough before wrapping my arms tightly around Jack. The first signs of dawn were beginning to show themselves as Jack pulled me to my feet. "I think it's time we got you back home." He said, taking my hand. We were turning around to leave, but were stopped in our tracks by one of the red-haired brothers and a knife. When had he gotten up?! "Rider! Looks like we're on the wanted list again." He said, waking his brunette partner and simultaneously his brother.

"Riderâ€|?" Jack asked, his brow furrowing. He suddenly flipped around, pulling me behind him with my back to a tree. Now fully awake and alert, Rider stood and looked at us. Suddenly, Jack started laughing. "Well if it isn't Frostbite!" Rider called, jogging over and waving to the man with knife to put it down. The man warily did so, before slinking off to his brother's side. "Flynn Riderâ€| You?! You managed to kidnap a prince?! Wellâ€| my applause, then." Jack said, turning sideways to wink at me slyly. I couldn't tell what he meant by thatâ€| maybe that I shouldn't worryâ€| or maybe that I should play along? Jack and Flynn slapped each other on their shoulders as greeting. I watched in awe as Jack came up with a whole story as to why he was there. "You know I couldn't resist the allure in kidnapping an already kidnapped prince." He began, "I had to follow your trail for three days before I found you. Not too shabby on your part considering it was me you were dealing with." He said, a surly, teasing smile on his lips. I didn't like the look one bit. Rider rolled his eyes, "Well I'll take that as a compliment, then. Come, get your hands off my prince and I might offer you some breakfast." Rider said.

Jack glanced wistfully back at me for a fleeting second before turning back to Riderâ€| and letting me go. I felt my heart sink into my shoes, and I could only hope my face didn't give it away. I was supposed to act like I didn't know him. Very well, then. Acting was something I could do. I threw on what felt like a straight face and tried to act annoyed. Rider quickly explained to the red heads that Jack was an old partner of his. This was news to me. Jack gave off such a lone wolf sort of vibe that I really couldn't picture him with a partner in thievery. The morning continued on like this until it was decided that Jack would join them all (under the pretense that he had nothing better to do) as they traveled further south to try and find a buyer. I was plopped down on the back of the terribly rowdy horse once more and forced to watch Jack's smug grin as he gently rode on Toothless. The day seemed to drag on and on forever as I awaited escape and after an eternity, we finally stopped for the night.

After a dinner I actually managed to force down, I was once again tied to a tree while they reminisced and went on about who-knows-what. In my subconscious I was tapping my foot anxiously as I waited for night to fall. Much to my relief, they decided to turn in early. Without making it seem too obvious, Jack casually walked by me to tie up Toothless and whispered, "Get some restâ€| and wake up quicker this time." He said, tilting his head and winking at me before letting out a huge yawn and lying down for some sleep. "_I _need to get up quicker? It took you _seven days_ to find me. _Not three_." I growled underneath my breath, pouting. I was getting

really, really, really tired of ropes. Jack, however, had looked amused as he tied me up. Kinky son of a... gods what a jerk.

* * *

><p>I couldn't sleep. Too high strung, I guess. Despite how well I was doing, I'd never been much of an actor. At least my lie about coming to steal Hiccup didn't seem unbelievable, and Flynn had always been a little dumb, so I figured I could get away with it. It was the other two I was really worried about. They didn't trust me, and I wouldn't have been surprised if they weren't asleep either. I rolled over in my sleep to gauge their reactions. One of them didn't flinch, just kept on breathing normally, while the other one's breathing hitched for a moment before resuming. One of them was awake, definitely, but you never knew about the ones who just kept breathing either. It was obvious they'd done this many times before, maybe they'd had practice in feigning sleep? I wouldn't have put it past guys with their looks. Hiccup was wide awake as I turned to look at him. He caught my gaze and looked at me expectantly. I hated to break his hope, but I was forced to shake my head and mouth, not yet.

Hiccup's face fell. _Not tonight? _He mouthed back. I shrugged a shoulder, _Maybe_. I pointed at the one whose breathing caught. _He's awake._ Hiccup pouted, and tilted his head to the side (the only movement he could make, really), _Boooo_.

Chuckling silently, I tried not to give us away to the brothers and stayed as quiet as possible. Hiccup sighed, annoyed. I couldn't stand pretending to be asleep any longer, so I sat up and moved to sit on a fallen log a few steps away from Hiccup. If I was going to let them know I was awake, I'd better be smart about it; these were no beginners. This time, though, both of them let their breathing falter. It had been right to be wary of the "sleeping" one. I pointed at both of them and mouthed to Hiccup, _Both awake_. Hiccup nodded only slightly and looked away from me. Oh great, now they were fully awake and watching him. Since they were already up, I poured myself another cup of whatever it was we had as coffee and leaned back on the tree behind me, expecting it to be a long night. After a while, Hiccup finally looked at me again. He nodded his head toward the red head at my right. _Asleep? _He asked, cocking his eyebrow up. I eyed the large man for a few moments before sliding my foot across the ground beneath me. Nothing happened, but I knew better with that one. I made a noise as if I was going to get off the log, and his breathing stopped immediately (along with his brother's). _Not asleep_.

The night continued on like that, and I wasn't able to leave the log until morning, when Flynn awoke with a loud yawn, followed instantly by the red heads, who you could tell hadn't had any sleep. They were all sleepily humping about, but I was absolutely awake. Staying up all night had given me lots of time to think, but now was the time to move. I nodded at Hiccup. _Ready? _Hiccup's eyes widened, and he smiled. I briefly smiled back before walking over to Toothless, who I'd tied intentionally loose to the tree. He'd done as I'd hoped and had gone to nibble on the tall grass behind Hiccup's tree. I made sure the three were looking as I fed Toothless an apple. In my peripheral vision I saw them all turn away, and in one swift movement, I swept the knife through the rope tying Hiccup to the tree. Glancing over my shoulder once more to see them all preoccupied

with a map, I released Toothless' reins and motioned for Hiccup to stand up. He moved more lithely to my side than I had expected, jumping onto Toothless without making a sound. I jumped on behind him, and off we ran.

Their distressed yells came following after us, but Toothless was just as fast in a forest as he was on a clear field. Hiccup laughed with pure joy as we made our escape out of the forest. "Directions!" He commanded me. "Go left!" I told him. We let out excited whoops and cheers as we continued down the road with our pursuers nowhere in sight. It didn't last long, however. As we neared the closest town, they became visible, popping out of the forest about 40 meters behind us all red-faced to match their hair. They were pouring out insults like a fountain and gaining on us and—| gods I was in my element. "Let me take the reins." I told him. As we came through town, I quickly guided us through back alleys and streets filled with people, trying to lose the three musketeers behind us. As we exited the crowds, I suddenly turned Toothless around. Hiding him behind a small curtained street shop, I listened for the commotion the three would make as they tore through town trying to find us. Like idiots, all three of them were still together as they came tumbling down the street. When they were gone, I ran Toothless in the other direction, which would mean heading back to the road we came from.

I felt better after we had spent fifteen minutes without seeing them. I slowed Toothless to a trot and headed back into the cover of the woods. "Gods, Hiccup." I said. He looked up at me with eyes that still sparkled with excitement, "What?" He asked. I shook my head and laid it on his shoulder, handing him the reins back. "You're giving me more trouble than the bloody chicken."

* * *

><p>I'm Baaaaaaaaack!

Arizona was wonderful and Italy was the best place I've ever been! Hope you guys didn't miss me too much CUZ I MISSED YOU.

_I had the most intense case of writer's block EVER when I came back, though, which I wasn't expecting. _

ANYWHOOO~ It's over now and I'm back in the writing saddle again. And just so you guys know, I ACTUALLY DID DO HIJACK WEEK. The story is completed and now all I have to do is wait for FF to stop being a butt and let me make a new story because I've tried to post it literally every day since I got back but it won't let me *cries*

ANYWHOOO X2~ Next chapter should hopefully be out soon. Hope you enjoyed this update because it was mainly plot BUT NEXT CHAPTER IS A FLUFF CHAPTER SO YAAAAY!

7. Chapter 7

Chapter 7

We didn't stop even once on our trek further south, then west. Jack knew how to hide our tracks well and was used to the less-used roads and paths. I had never seen him more alive. It was like watching a

moonflower bloom, and this was his moonlight. It scared me at first, the way Jack operated. We would be riding down the streets of a town quietly one moment, and the next we'd be racing through the streets with some stolen money, food, etc. that Jack had scooped up. By the lopsided smile on his face I could tell, he had missed his previous life. Quite honestly, it scared me to death every time he would do such a thing, but his bright grin afterwards would make it okay.

By the end of the day we were both saddle sore and ready for a good night's sleep. I asked Jack whether or not he thought the terrible trio would be able to find us there. He shook his head, confident. "Noâ€¦ at this point, they'll have given up on their search. They know I have you, and I think it was overly obvious by the way I let you take the horse that I'm not a thief but a rescue partyâ€¦ ha. That's a first. So they'll think we're heading back up towards the castle cityâ€¦ but they won't follow us- or the 'us' they think they're following, anyway- too far north. The guards are on high alert as it is, and if their employer finds out or we point the knights in the right directionâ€¦ well that's just the end for them." He said. "So for us, that meansâ€¦?" I asked, wanting to know our plan for getting back. "So that means," He said, "We get a day off."

Jack threw me another carefree grin, and I found myself loving that smile more and more each time he made it. The small fire Jack had made was already nothing but gently glowing embers. Jack was propped up against a tree, and feeling brave, I laid my head in his lap. "You knowâ€¦ You make a pretty nice pillow after being tied to a tree for a week." I told him. He rolled his eyes, "Glad to be of service, your highness." Gently he began petting my hair. I let my eyes close and really breathed for the first time in a week. "I missed you. Very much." I told him, blushing at the words that felt very unlike me to say. I could hear the smile in his voice when he replied. "That's a good thing. I missed you more." He said, and I shook my head against his leg. "Impossible." I told him. He laughed a little, mussing my hair. "Oh I definitely did." He said, "Especially this part." He said, and before I could ask which part he meant, his lips were on mine.

All too soon, they disappeared. "Go to sleep, princess. You've got a week's worth to catch up on." He whispered, leaning back on the tree again. I was too tired to argue with the princess comment. Closing my eyes, I gently breathed in Jack's scent and fell head first into what felt like the best night's sleep of my lifeâ€¦

The next morning we slept in. I imagine it was about ten-ish when I finally woke. The sunlight poured down through the leaves of the trees in a way different from those that surrounded the castle. It felt that way, at least. Birds were chirping and the sound of a brook floated up from behind us. The pine needles had made a nice cushion underneath me, and my cheek was still nicely propped up on Jack'sâ€¦ _that was too hard to be a leg_.

Blushing heavily, I sat up straight and cross-legged in a flash. Looking back down where my head had been just moments before, I was greeted with the sight of Jack's highly pitched tent. "Oh godsâ€¦" I mumbled, rubbing the bridge of my nose. I was just about to go stand up to find that brook when Jack madeâ€¦ a noise. Gasping, I suddenly forgot how to use my legs. How the hell did a sound like _that _come from _Jack_?! "Pffft!" I could barely control the loud guffaws that

pressed against my lips, fighting for escape. Jack's face looked like it was in pain but based off his "little companion" it must've been quite the opposite. Since he'd probably be waking up soon, and I knew my face would give me away, I tore myself from the ground to go and find the brook. As I paced quietly through the trees, I couldn't help the question that begged to be askedâ€¦ Just who was he dreaming about? I found myself blushing as the first obvious answer came to mind, and tried to wave it away with my palm. "Noâ€¦ no. Absolutely notâ€¦ that'sâ€¦" but then it occurred to me that I'd rather he be dreaming about me like that than anyone elseâ€¦ Huh. Priorities. Brookâ€¦ that's what I was doing.

Shaking my head, I followed the sound until the brush became dense around the water's path. Perching myself on a nice boulder at the edge of the small stream, I picked through the pebbles at my feet. I'd been waiting not ten minutes before there came a call back in the direction of where we had fallen asleep. "Hiccup! Where did you go?" Jack's voice travelled through the pines. "I'm over here!" I called back, skipping a rock over the edge of the water. I could hear Jack fumbling around in the brush behind me. "Marco!" He called. I laughed a little, noticing that the weeds behind me made for a pretty good cover. "Polo!" I returned, listening as he took a few more steps in my direction. "Marco!" He tried again, fumbling a little as he got closer. "Polo!" I called back once more. I listened again for the footsteps that were supposed to comeâ€¦ but they didn't. "Polo?" I askedâ€¦ wondering if maybe there had been an echo or something. Once again, there was no reply. I stood up, revealing myself, yes, but wondering what had happened. "Marco!"

SPLOOSH!

Jack had jumped out of the weeds behind me, grabbed me around my shoulders, lost his footing, and took us both flying into the brook. "Heheâ€¦" "Pffftâ€¦ hahaha!" Once it had registered to us what had happened we were a fit of chuckles as we slipped around, thoroughly drenched. "Gods, Jack! What were you thinking sneaking up like that?" I asked, sliding onto my rock again. "That the rocks would be less slippery." He returned, wringing out the bottom of his tunic. "Oh, and by the way, isn't Marco Polo supposed to be played with your eyes closed?" I asked, wittingly looking up at him. Jack rolled his eyes, "Oh detailsâ€¦" he said. I smirked, ignoring him, "In fact I'm fairly sure it's the whole point of the gameâ€¦" I continued. Jack pursed his lips before the now-familiar twinkle of mischief glinted in his ice-blue eyes. "Oh, bother it!" He said, sloping downward before skimming his hand over the water and sending a tiny wave into my face.

"You did not just splash me!" I squealed, wiping the water from my eyes. I pitched my hand into the water below me, sending a return attack and before I knew it we were engaged in a small war. "Oh-ho, Hic! You really shouldn't have done that." Jack said, a teasing, playful smile on his lips. Despite myself, I couldn't help scurrying back a few steps, not going unnoticed by my companion. "Well I may not know Marco Polo, but I do know how to chase after a prince!" He said, before lunging forward and running across the moss-covered rocks below. Peals of laughter rang out from both of us each time he would almost catch me. "Oh sure you do! Mr. It-only-took-me-three-days!" I taunted, squirreling over some tall weeds on the bank and into the soft mud beside the stream. I tripped my way through the underbrush until my bare feet were met by pine

needles soggy from the morning dew. I could hear Jack as he splashed out of the brook behind me. My heart beating out of my chest, I tried to tiptoe my way around the needles faster.

"You may be faster in the water, but on dry land, you're mine!" Jack said. Suddenly, my arm was swung to the side, forcing me to slip on the loose needles and land my back on a tree. "Ah! How do you move that fast?!" I asked him. Jack was propping me up against the tree, pinning me there with a slow grin. "You forget that I hate shoes. I'm used to rough ground" He said, leaning his forehead against mine while trying to catch his breath. "Really hahaha" Good morning." I said, pecking him lightly on the nose. "Good morniiiiing." He sang, and just because I couldn't help myself, I asked, "So, have a nice dream?"

As expected, Jack's face grew the slightest shade of pink but the blush was still obviously there. "Ah" haa" um, yes." He said, looking away and breaking our contact. "W-what about you?" He asked, trying to turn the attention towards me. "Not bad. I don't really remember it." I said, trying to hide my smile. Jack turned and began walking back towards the camp. Feeling brave, I grabbed his hand, stopping him. "You're forgetting something, aren't you?" I asked. Jack turned around with his signature smirk, "Am I? Hmm" maybe you should remind me." He said. I threw him my own smirk, "Here, lean down and I'll tell you." I instructed, letting go of his hand to wrap my arm around his neck. In return, he wrapped his arms around my waist. He bent his head down slightly before pressing his lips to mine. Jack pulled me into a long kiss, making my head go fuzzy and my knees wobbly. When it was over, he snaked his hand around mine again and walked me back to where Toothless was still tied to a tree. We released him and mounted, Jack in front this time, which I didn't really mind since he would know the way better.

We later stopped at a town where Jack bought me some plain clothes at a small merchant's shop. The clothes consisted of a green summer tunic, brown pants, some boots, and a brown sash. Jack leaned down to whisper in my ear, "I like green on you." With a turn of my head, I blushed. That was one thing I hadn't missed whilst being kidnapped. "Thank'ee for yer business, sir." The man said happily, pawing the coin in his hand. "Yes" Tell me, why is there no one on the streets today? This town has always been bustling every time I've gone through it in the past." Jack asked, eyeing the streets warily. The merchant looked up at us through excited bushy eyebrows, "Oh! That'd be because of the fair today! You came at a lucky time too, there's supposed to be a tournament and some jesters and I've heard they've also a magician!" Said the old man. Jack's eyes widened, "It's been years since I last saw a good fair" What do you say, Hiccup? Shall we go?" He asked. I nodded my head, "I've never seen one. I'd want to see what it's like before I go back." I told him. Jack's eyes saddened for a moment, but brightened back up just as quickly. "Alright, then." He said, leading us back through some back alleys and onto a large road that cut through the center of town past a large field on the outskirts which held the marketplace. It was alive with activity and people buzzing about. The women wore their brightest colored gowns and frocks while the men guffawed drunkenly at jesters or athletic competitions.

I found myself feeling very out of place, but Jack looked like a small excited child the way he pulled me along by the elbow. "Oh! I wonder if they have a man on stilts! That was always my favorite

performance when I was young. I actually tried it onceâ€¦ it didn't end well." He said, slowing down as we passed by a blacksmith's stall. "Oh!" I said, eyeing a nice crossbow that had been delicately carved on the sides, "That's a nice piece of work there. It's harder than it looks." I told him, gliding my fingers over its smooth finish. "Really? That's something I've never tried actually." He said, examining the wood. "I'll teach you." I told him, happy that I knew something he didn't. Jack smiled, "I'd like that." He said, leading me away from the stall down to a booth where the smell of food came wafting through the paths. "Why don't you wait down by those trees over there and I'll get us some food, hmm?" He asked, pointing to where some trees made for nice shade at the edge of a wood. I nodded, walking over and planting myself at the base of a tall pine.

Jack came back a while later with some meat, bread, and wine. I jumped up to take some of it out of his hands as he balanced the food precariously across his arms. Once we were settled, Jack dug in like he hadn't eaten in days. Truthfully, seven days was quite a small time to be able to find me. I wasn't really surprised to think that he might've had to skip meals. "So, how do you like it?" He asked, taking another large bite. "The food or the festivities?" I asked. Jack waved a chicken leg around, gesturing towards the scene around us, "All of it." He said. I took a look around, "It'sâ€¦ definitely different from what I'm used to. That's not a bad thing, however. I like it." I told him, giving a small smile. Jack nodded his head in approval, continuing to munch on whatever it was he was eating that I was too afraid to touch. The evening sunshine shined down in brilliant orange, pink, and gold stripes through the clouds. It felt good to just be able to sit and relax after all the days spent travelling (that one included). Having Jack as my companion only made it that much more enjoyable. "There's a whole lot more to the world outside the castle than just war and crime, you know." He said, looking out across at the festival, "I suppose we're just lucky that you'll be the person to protect all of the good one day." He told me, eyeing me from the side.

I had never thought of it that way. My father ruled as if the country was his property and he wanted to keep it free of pests. I'd always thought that as a king all I would be expected to do was go to war and make laws and be an overall kingly person. Jack had an entirely different view of it. A protector? That... didn't sound bad at all, especially when compared to a "conqueror". I found myself smiling at the thought. For the first time in my life, being a king didn't sound so bad. How had just a few simple words changed my entire view on life? Jack had made me question myself more than once over the time I had come to know him. "Iâ€¦ don't think I want to be like my father." I told him, taking in the sight of a juggler trying to woo a young girl. Jack's eyes widened into spheres, "You don't want to be king?!" He asked, shocked. I waved my hands back and forth as to dispel his thought. "No, no, no. I do, actually, now anywaysâ€¦ I just think my father is a bit possessive? Maybe that's not the right wordâ€¦ oh bother it. Just let it suffice to say I like your way of thinking as opposed to his." I told him, completely mucking up. Jack cocked his head to the side with a small smile, "You're such a strange oneâ€¦ but I like you." He said, sliding across the pine needles to sit beside me. "That's good." I said, elbowing him in the side.

We stayed at the fair for a while, glancing at the shops before Jack saw something that caught his eye. "Ah look!" He said, pointing over

to the field where targets were being set up. "I've never tried an archery tournament before! I think I'll do that." He told me, a sparkle in his eye. "Do you always do that?" I asked him. "What?" He replied, pulling me towards the field. "You do this thingâ€¦ it's like you're checking things off a list of what you want to do." I told him. Jack nodded a little, thinking about it. "I suppose I do. I mean, there's only so much time we're given, might as well try a little of everything." He said, letting go of my arm as he jogged to borrow a bow. He waltzed back over to me, whistling again. "Wish me luck, princess." He said with a wink, dodging my attempted smack to his upper arm. I turned and went to find a place to watch among the crowd. I landed between a huge man on my left and two teenaged girls on my right. They looked to be about thirteen and chatted excitedly about the men who would be entering the contest. Soon the tournament began.

"Oh! Mary look look look! That boy over there has white hair!" Said the brown-haired one. Mary replied, "I don't see him." The brunette sighed, rolling her eyes before pointing out Jack in the crowd. "Ohâ€¦ wowâ€¦" Mary sighed, looking conspiratorially at the other girl. "_Riiiiight_?" miss brown-hair asked, blushing. Mary continued to stare in Jack's direction, "Janeâ€¦ do you thinkâ€¦ oh! Why don't we talk to him after the tournament?!" Mary suggested, biting her lip in excitement. Jane's eyes widened, her small mouth popping open in a small O. "Mary! When did you become such a scandal?!" She asked, laughing at her friend. After hearing this little conversation, I found myself growingâ€¦ jealous. I didn't like the feeling. Their voices echoed nastily in the back of my head whenever I tried to push them out. What was I getting so worked up for? I wanted to tell them that Jack was _mine_.

Ohâ€¦

Jack was mine.

"Take aim!" A loud voice rang across the field. The archers raised their bows, all identical in a line. Jack's tall silhouette was perfectly balanced between his two feet, his shoulders and back straight, with a face decorated by a never-ending wink. His signature smirk laid lightly on his lips, my view interrupted by the bow string. It was very nice to look at. Shaking my head, I looked out to Jack's target instead. "Shoot!" The voice called out once more, and arrows came flying all at the same time, each speeding across the space towards the targets. Jack had made it. A large grin came over my face as the targets were moved back a few more paces. The first shot had taken out about one fourth of the competitors. There were still twelve people left on the field, and with an order from the announcer, they all raised their bows once more. "He made it through!" Mary squealed beside me. Jane nodded happily beside her. "What if he wins?" She asked, fiddling with her skirts. Mary pursed her lips, "That won't be any goodâ€¦ then we won't be the only girls with an eye out for him."

The archers let their next shot free, but I didn't even have to look up to know the result. "Again! Mary he made it again! Oh we must must talk to him afterwards! I don't care what the other girls might do, we'll get to him first!" Jane said. My teeth ground into themselves. _I'd like to see you try._ I thought, instantly feeling bad about speaking -thinking- to the girls so harshly. That wasn't like me at all. Maybe if I movedâ€¦ "Shoot!" The voice called again,

pulling me out of my thoughts. The targets had moved quite a distance from where they had begun. I looked back at Jack's to find his arrow planted firmly near the right side. There were only four men left, and Jack was one of them. Another round, and Jack was still in. It was down to the last two, Jack against a man with a huge hat to his rightâ€¦ but thatâ€¦ huh?!

I stripped myself away from the crowd, Jack temporarily forgotten. I fell through the crowd, my view of the competition blocked by the people surrounding me. "Shoot!" rang out across the field, and cheers exploded from all around. I didn't know whether to cheer or pout, but just kept forcing my way through until I had broken out into view again. Jack stood solemnly, eyeing his target with an annoyed expressionâ€¦ his arrow nowhere to be found. On the other hand, his rival stood excitedly jumping onâ€¦ hisâ€¦ heels with a huge smile on his face. That couldn't be- "Hiccup!" Jack called, eyeing me through the crowd and waving me over. I came to his side, all the while eyeing the big-hatted person.

* * *

><p>Something was wrong with Hiccup. Oh godsâ€¦ was he really that disappointed for me? His face looked more as if he were confused though, and he was looking away. Wait, was he disappointed in me? My face blanched. "H-Hic?" I asked, "You alright?" I tried, rubbing my hands anxiously as he continued to approach. "Fineâ€¦" He said, as if he wasn't quite focused on the here-and-now. "So I lostâ€¦ hahaâ€¦" I told him as he stopped in front of me. That seemed to knock him out of his reverie. "Oh, yeah. Sorry, Jack. But at least you made second place!" He said cheerily, flashing me a quick smile before his eyes dashed to my right once more. "Umâ€¦ Hiccup? Are you sure there isn't anything wrong? You seem distracted." I asked, my eyebrows knitting together. Hiccup sighed, "Jack I'm really proud of you and we'll celebrate in five minutes but we need to do something really quick." He said, looking up at me briefly and then continuing to stare at some point to our right. "Alright? Um, let's do that then." I said, relieved he wasn't mad at me but afraid that something really wasn't right.

Hiccup pulled me by the sleeve of my tunic towards the man who had won against me. When we had gotten close enough, we were enveloped in a swarm of praising girls and congratulatory back-slapping. My competitor began to move away from the crowd after a while, but Hiccup followed. I wondered what on Earth Hic could possibly need to do that involved that man. I had never been a sore loser, but after a while it was starting to rub me the wrong way. "Hiccup what exactly are we doing?" I asked him, slightly annoyed as he pulled me along. "Confirming something." He said. Well of all the stupid times to be bleak. What had gotten into him? Finally after being forced to witness all the praises and prizes thrown upon the man, we followed him to the tree line where he then leaned against the trunk of a tall pine. "Excuse meâ€¦ sir. I couldn't help but to want to grant you your due congratulations on winning." Hiccup said. That was his prince-y voice. I grew suspicious, eyeing the stranger carefully now.

The large hat's brim tilted upward as the winner looked up from his apple. Bright green eyes looked up gently, suddenly widening. "Endy?!" He asked, his voice higher than I had expected. Hiccup relaxed the tension in his shoulders and burst out into a huge grin.

"Rapunzel you tricky girl!" He cried, opening his arms wide and allowing the stranger to jump into them. What? "Ahahaha! I missed youoooo!" The man named Rapunzel squealed. That was a very un-manly squealâ€| not to mention an unmanly nameâ€| wait, had Hiccup called him a tricky _girl?_ Before I'd had time to think it all the way through, Rapunzel had Hiccup by the sleeve, pulling him into the woods. With a wave of his hand, Hiccup signaled for me to follow. We walked a bit of distance before Rapunzel reached a satchel and parcel hidden in a hollow log. The trees blocked all view from the fair, and I wondered silently what could possibly need hiding that far out. In front of me, Hiccup and the man chatted eagerly as I tuned into their conversation. "â€|so Gobber ended up asking Aster for yet another 'small favor' and here I am! Oh, and speaking of, how is the old man?" Rapunzel asked. "Aster's fine, still grumpy as ever." Hiccup replied. They fell into an almost awkward silence before neither of them could hold back their laughter. "Gods I still can't believe it's you!" They said. At the exact same time.

"Pffffhahaha!" Their loud guffaws echoed through the forest while I just became more and more confused. "Hiccup? Please tell me what's going on. Who is he?" I asked, exasperated. Hiccup looked up like he'd forgotten I was even there, and his eyes immediately softened, still glistening. "Ah, sorry Jack. Love, this is Rapunzel. She's the daughter of one of the maids that used to look after me long ago. We were good friends but she and her mother disappeared when I was only five." My brain scatted in three directions all at once. One, Hiccup had just called me Love for the first time. Two: Daughter, She, and she again. Three, I lost to a girl. "Nice to meet you. I'm Jack Frost." I introduced myself, dipping my head. Rapunzel grinned widely before lifting the large hat off of her head. One huge braid came pouring forth after being freed from the confines of the cap. It landed gracefully around her ankles, still clad in men's shoes. "Likewise. Now you two turn your backs, I'll be done changing in a moment." She said, waving her finger in a small swirl. Hiccup and I did as she bid us. The sound of rustling fabric and ties being pulled tight filled the small glen. After a few minutes, she told us we were free to turn around.

Rapunzel had changed into a pink and purple dressâ€| and no shoes. Either she was a kindred spirt, or she had just forgotten to pack them. She threw the satchel around her shoulder, gathering her disguise back in the cloth she had used to carry the dress. She plopped her hat down on Hiccup's head, covering his eyes. Hiccup pushed up the brim of the hat, rolling his eyes as we followed after her. Before long, we were back at the fair, roaming through the crowds until we had reached empty streets where we reclaimed Toothless and Rapunzel's own horse. "Oh! Do you two mind if I stop to buy something for a moment?" She asked, pointing at a small fruit stand. We shrugged our shoulders and climbed off of Toothless once more. The stand had apples. I decided I needed some of those. Despite how long I had been away from a life involving thievery, I still had a sort of _need _to have apples. We already had a small bag full but it couldn't hurt to get a few more. I reached out towards them to see how ripe they were.

"Don't. You. Dare."

Hiccup looked up at me warningly through impossibly long lashes. Alright. Maybe we had five small bags full. I dropped my hand to my side and tried not to look at the beckoning red fruit. Hiccup nodded

his head approvingly before turning his attention back to Rapunzel, who was waiting for the man in front of us to finish paying. Was that just a popular haircut orâ€¦ waitâ€¦ The man turned around, purchases in hand.

Flynn Rider was just as surprised to see us as we were to see him. Even more surprising, the one he recognized first wasn't me or Hiccup, but Rapunzel.

"You!"

"Yoouuuu!"

"My satchel!"

* * *

><p>You know, I could probably write some killer Drapple.

SO HAS ANYBODY ELSE SEEN THE TRAILER FOR 'BIG HERO 6'?! I am seriously jumping up and down in extreme excitement for this movie. I already ship Jack x Hiccup x Hiro and I can't wait to write some glorious fanfics for these three. (Hic and Jacky are still my babes though). Anywhoo... you need to go watch the trailer if you haven't already. Like now. And then come back and comment so we can fangirl together about how cute it is.

I'm really sorry about this update being late. My dog died and then I had to make an emergency visit up to my grandma's and you guys know I don't ever post on weekdays so... yeah. Bad author *slaps my wrist*

Now don't go crazy on me here, but I've been thinking about what sort of thing I should do next after this story is complete. (There's still tons left to be said in this one though so don't freak out. It's ok.) Anywhoo, if you want to, help me out by commenting the number of which idea you like best.

1. In which Jack is a dancer and Hiccup is an assistant director in a musical they work on together

2. 50's AU

3. Something where Hiccup is the autumn spirit and Jack is winter spirit (I'm pretty sure this has been done before though...)

4. Hijack A-Z oneshots

5. In which Baby Tooth drags Jack to a gay bar where Hiccup is a clumsy janitor.

6. ipod shuffle challenge oneshots

7. 30 day Hijack challenge oneshots

8. Jack x Hiccup x Jackson (human Jack) Three-way relationship drabbles

_9. Jack x Hiccup x Toothless In which Toothless and Jack fight over

Hiccup and end up sharing him._

10. Jack finds Hiccup's blog and funny things happen

11. Deertaur Hijack fluff

Whew... I think that's it. Talk to you lovelies next week.

8. Chapter 8

Chapter 8

It was him! I jumped back about three feet, scanning the streets for any sign of his red-headed companions. "My satchel!" Flynn screeched. Huh? Why was he yelling at Punzie? Rapunzel hid the light brown bag behind her dress. "I don't know what you're talking about _Flynn Rider_." "Yes you do you-!" Before he could get all the words out, Punzie threw the satchel back to me. "Eh?!" I screeched, almost dropping it. "And you!" Rider hissed. "M-m-me...?" I stammered, stepping backward until I my back met Jack's chest. Jack's face was pulled tight, ready for a fight. He put a hand on my shoulder and stepped in front of me. "So where are those ginger dunderheads that were dragging you around?" He asked. Flynn snarled, "I stole the money we made off the little prince's kidnapping and ditched them. Only then blondie here stole it from _me_! And I'm going to get it back now if you don't mind." Flynn said, a dangerous lopsided grin on his face. I peeked out from behind Jack, watching as Rapunzel moved her arm ever so slowlyâ€¦ Was that a pocket? _Oh Rapunzel you tricky, tricky girl_.

Flynn made a move as if he were going to grab at the satchel, but as he lunged forward, out from Rapunzel's dress came aâ€¦ frying pan. Manning it with both hands, she lifted the pan high and brought it down hard onto Rider's crown. The thief froze up for a moment, his mind and body stunned temporarily before collapsing onto the ground. "Oh ho ho! Hiccup, we might just have to keep this girl!" Jack said, laughing at the scene. The man who owned the fruit stand stood wide-mouthed gaping at the mangled Flynn that Punzie had brought to the ground. "Well, we can't just leave him here." I said. As much as I would have liked to, I didn't want the fruit stand man to have to deal with the limp body. He looked too high-strung as it was without a man passed out in front of his stand. Jack looked disappointed by the comment, but didn't fight it. Rapunzel, however, had a thing or two to say. "Oh just let him lay there! He doesn't deserve any kindness afterâ€¦".

And here she trailed off and the largest blush I'd ever seen on her crossed her cheeks all the way up to her ears. I tilted an eyebrow up, a small grin on my face. "After what?" I asked her. Punzie pursed her lips and looked away. "N-none of your business!" She said, her voice giving away the fact that she had something to hide. I laughed under my breath "Mhmm. I'm sure. Well we can't leave him here, this poor man's about to have a fit. Let's just put him in the forest or something." I told them, coming out from behind Jack. "Well if we're going to do something, it might as well be funny. Hic, how about we get a little bit of revenge too?" He asked. Rapunzel cocked her head to the side, "Wait, you both know him too? What has he done to you?" Jack looked at me as if asking permission to tell her. I shrugged my shoulder, only just realizing that I probably should've been

embarrassed by the whole thing. "Hic- er, Horrendous was kidnapped by him and two red-headed ruffians about a week back. We just got away from them yesterday. So technically, that money in your hands is Flynn's pay for stealing the prince."

Rapunzel looked at the bag in her hands, then back up, and back down again. "So, um, would you like-" I shook my head, "No, no, no. It was never my money in the first place, and you need it more than I ever would." I told her, turning back to Toothless. After digging around in a bag, I brought out a length of rope. "So, about revenge. Let's see how _he _likes sleeping tied to a tree, hmm?" I said while handing the rope to Jack. He smiled, "I like that plan."

* * *

><p>We found a relatively remote place in the woods and proceeded to tie Flynn to a tree. Hiccup and Rapunzel continued to chat about things that had happened years ago while I made a fire and listened. We had been there for maybe five hours, talking our way through the night, before Flynn woke up with a loud groan. "Rise and shine, sleeping ugly. You've got some explaining to do." I said, poking him in the forehead with a stick I'd been messing with. It took a minute for Fynn to realize his situation. He glanced around him, his eyes finally coming to land on the ropes that held him to the tree. "Hahaâ€|haaâ€| Funny. Explaining?" He said, looking up to meet my gaze. "First, who was it?" I asked, using the stick to draw scribbles in the dirt. Flynn sighed and flipped his hair to the side. "This is gonna land me in prison, isn't it? I can't believe you're a knight now. Youâ€| traitor." He said. I looked downward, giving my own sigh and tightening my lips. "I'm not a knight. Answer the question or I might bring you back in for the reward money though."<p>

Flynn frowned and blew some hair out of his eyes. "Fine. We were hired by Duke Pitch." He said. I looked back at Hiccup to see if he had any idea as to who that was. "I already knew, Jack. It was my uncleâ€| though I'd not call him that ever again. I'd wager he was also the one behind my mother'sâ€| poisoning. Gods only know if he's gotten to my father by now as well." Hiccup said. Rapunzel's eyes popped wide open. "Your mother was poisoned?!" She asked, her eyes near tears. Hiccup gave her an encouraging smile, "Unfortunately so, gods rest her soul." Rapunzel let a tear escape out of the side of her eye, "Ohâ€| Auntie Valâ€|" She sobbed into her hands. Hiccup rubbed her back gently. I mouthed, "_Auntie?" _to Hiccup. He sent back, "_No. Just good friends."_ I nodded, turning back towards Flynn. Rapunzel dried her tears with the skirt of her dress and straightened up. "Butâ€| why?" She asked. Hiccup shrugged. "He's always felt slighted that his brother got the kingdom. Jealousy I suppose. If he gets rid of the three, erâ€| two of us, he'll become king."

"Well, in that case we'd better hurry and get you back to the castle." I said, breaking the stick in half. "So if you're not taking me to prison, what _are _you going to do?" Flynn asked, squirming against his bonds. "Oh, I don't knowâ€|" Hic started, "The way I'm thinking, it would be a waste to kill him right? I mean, he's obviously not educated but he's pretty tough so he'll make a good slave. Then there's also theâ€| _market_. He's got a nice face, that'll get us a pretty penny or two apart from what we've already reclaimed." He continued, staring pointedly at Flynn, who seemed to grow more and more uncomfortable with each word. "Ahâ€| suppose I

sort of deserved that." He said, looking down guiltily. Hiccup stood, arching his back. "What do you think, Jack? You probably know what you're doing better than me." He asked.

I shrugged, "Well I guess there's always what you said, but knowing Flynn, he'd get out right away. We only have one horseâ€¦ How about we just leave him here?" I proposed, leaning my back on the tree behind me. Hiccup nodded, but Rapunzel squirmed. "Hey Endyâ€¦ would you allow me to take him?" She asked. Both of our jaws dropped, "What?!" Rapunzel bit her lower lip, "It's justâ€¦ I have a proposal for him." She said. Flynn looked up, intrigued. "What kind of proposal?" Rapunzel looked away, back towards the satchel that sat idly on the ground beside her. "Umâ€¦ There's really no need to go into the specificsâ€¦" She said, shying away from the question. "Punzieâ€¦" Hiccup began. "Endy. I've been fine on my own for twelve years, I'll be fine dealing with someone as thick as him." She said, shooting him an earnest eye. Hiccup sighed and looked at her for a few moments before replying. "â€¦Fine."

Rapunzel gave a small smile before looking up. "It's gotten terribly late. I believe I'll go to sleep now. You two should get some rest as well if you're to be travelling tomorrow. And as for you... I hope you stay up all night with a headache. That will just make it easier for me." She said, a conspirator's smile on her lips. Flynn pouted. "Ah thank you, how kind. Have horrible dreams~." He replied. Rapunzel rolled her eyes before pulling out a blanket. I stood up before moving to get some bedding for us as well. I had scooped up a large summertime sheet made of a light, slick material earlier in the day and proceeded spread it upon the ground. The neglected fire was little more than embers at that point, but it wouldn't be needed in the warm summer air anyway. Rapunzel laid herself down, her horse already settled in beside her. Flynn hadn't taken her wish and was sawing logs before too long. Hiccup walked over to my side. "Would you, um, like to accompany me for a walk?" He asked, his signature blush gracing his cheeks. I smiled, "Always."

I took his hand, assuming that Flynn's loud snoring meant he wasn't watching. We walked together for a while, neither of us wanting to say anything until we were completely out of hearing range. Crickets chirped around us as we came to a stopping point on a small hill. I sat on a boulder that had been worn smooth with age and patted the space beside me. Hiccup climbed up, our hips touching, and set his head upon my shoulder. "What a dayâ€¦" He said, sighing contentedly. I fiddled around with his fingers entwined in mine. "It was a good day though, right?" I asked. He nodded his head into my shoulder, "Unlike any otherâ€¦ Did you always live like this?" He inquired, looking up at me through his lashes. I shook my head, "No, not all the time anyway. I didn't usually like to stay in the same place for more than five hours unless I was sleepingâ€¦ and even then it was risky." I told him, before leaning forward to get off the rock and sitting down in the grass. "It was a good, though. Kept me feeling veryâ€¦ alive? I suppose the same can be said for the hard work Aster keeps me at as well. Two entirely different experiences, they are."

Hiccup nodded, following me to the ground. "Thank you by the way." He said. I looked up, brushing the bangs out of his eyes. "For?" I asked. He grabbed my hand beside his face, holding to his cheek. "For showing me the good side." He said, placing a quick kiss to the side of my thumb. I smirked, "Glad to be of service, your highness." I

told him, bringing our joined hands forward to kiss the back of his. He blew a sigh. "Haahhhâ€| you always know just how to ruin a moment, don't you?" He accused, a small smile playing on the corners of his lips. "Ruin? Nooooâ€| I make them better." I told him. Hiccup scoffed, "I don't see how." I pulled him closer, throwing his arm over my shoulder and leaving our faces only inches apart. "By distracting you." I said, closing the distance between us. Hiccup's eyes widened for a moment, and I took the opportunity to stare into them. Our lips had met, but I was concentrating on his eyes, making him feel each part of me more as our gazes met.

It was definitely having the desired effect on my counterpart. Before long Hiccup couldn't keep his eyes open and was gasping for air. I let him breathe for a few seconds as I shifted him up to where he was straddling my lap. He pulled his fingers through my hair, tugging lightly as I worked on his neck. Feeling audacious, I sucked down harder than normal, leaving a mark. Hiccup let out a muffled whimper. I trailed my lips back up to his ear. "Nobody's here this time. Let me hear you." I told him, dragging my fingers along his spine. He gave a delicious shiver as my hands travelled lower to the rim of his trousers. "J-Jack!" He cried, biting into his lip. "Hmm?" I asked, pressing another small kiss to his collarbone. "W-we're in a- ha-ah! haa- a forestâ€|" He gasped, clinging onto me. I snickered, slipping a finger underneath the cloth. "Andâ€|?" I prodded. Hiccup, growing ever more out of breath, moved his hands to my shoulders. "N-notâ€| hereâ€|"

OH GODS NOT AGAIN.

* * *

><p>Jack's hands flopped to the side rather unceremoniously, and even though I'd been protesting so much earlierâ€| I didn't quite like it. "Jack?" I asked, trying to steal back lost breaths. He pushed his forehead into my chest, a sigh escaping him. "A-are you alright?" I asked, terribly confused. Jack just stayed quiet for a few moments, testing my nerves. The silence grew uncomfortable, but I didn't know what to do. Finally he spoke. "I'mâ€| fine." He said, staying there. "Would you like me to, um," "Yes." He interrupted, forcing himself to get the word out. "A-Alright." I said, sliding off of his lap as he then continued to fall onto his side. "Youâ€| go ahead and go on to sleep first. I'll be there soonâ€|" He told me, his voice heavy. The statement sent a pang through my chest, and I visibly winced, but he wouldn't have seen it curled up on his side like he was. I left without another word, walking back the way we had come. "What did I do?" I whispered to myself, hugging my sides. I bit at my lip again and rested my shoulder against a tree. In the distance I could see the softly glowing remnants of the fire, but they didn't feel welcoming.<p>

Tears pooled behind my eyes, but I refused to set them free. It was all I could do to just prop myself up for a little while and calm my thundering heartbeat. All the while I stood wondering what had made him upset. It wasn't that I couldn't guess, but I didn't understand why it had made him _that_ angry. I had only said no because I thoughtâ€| I justâ€| wanted it to be special. I pulled myself from the tree, pushing off of it and letting my hand fall exhaustedly to my side. I trudged forward before landing heavily on the sheet and curling myself into it, tugging the fabric over my ears. Behind me the sound of Flynn's snores drifted as a welcome distraction to my

ears. I closed my eyes tightly, trying to force sleep into coming. It seemed like I laid there for hours with the same thoughts rolling though my head and sleep evading me. Eventually, though, Jack did come back. I pretended to sleep. What could I even say if he knew I was awake? He climbed in beside me, and I could feel the new distance between us.

The morning came, and with it an unfamiliar awkward air. Rapunzel immediately noticed, her senses as sharp as ever. She pulled me to the side as we prepared the horses, "Something's wrong, isn't it?" She asked, holding the sides of my face and looking into my eyes. I might've be able to trick the girlsâ€¦ but Rapunzel was an entirely different story. "Punzieâ€¦ I can't really tell you." I was getting so tired of keeping it a secret, even though I knew it had to be done. Even Rapunzelâ€¦ It was just too risky. Toothless bent his head down to nibble on some last-minute grass before we set off again. Rapunzel eyed me sadly. "He didn't do anything did he? I could always whip out the frying pan while he's not looking, you knowâ€¦" She said, smirking. I laughed, "No need. A maiden shouldn't dirty her hands anyway." I said, nudging her side. She flipped on her large hat, "Maiden! You can _me _maiden?! Scoundrel!" She shouted, lowering her voice to a comical growl. I took off the hat "But the prettiest maiden in the kingdom my dear _Sir_." I said, plopping the hat on my own head.

She pouted, but couldn't hold it as giggles poured forth from her mouth. I joined her, temporarily forgetting the events of the previous night. "Are you all set?" I asked. She nodded, "I should be good for about three days." She said. I eyed the man still tied to the tree. "â€¦And you're absolutely positive you can handle him?" I asked, looking for any sort of worry in her appearance. She gave a small smile. "I'll be fine, Endy. Never met a man I couldn't handle." She said, winking as she reined her horse. I sighed, still unsure. "Fineâ€¦ And this time, Rapunzel, don't you dare take thirteen years to visit." I told her, giving a stern look. She rolled her eyes, "Yes your royal majesty ma'am." I just laughed as we walked back to where Flynn still sat on the ground. We untied him from the tree, but kept him bound as he was deposited onto Punzie's horse. We said our goodbyes, and I hugged her before she climbed onto the large animal. Jack stood talking to Flynn. "You're still an ass, Frost." He said, spitting at him. "Old news," Jack said, dodging the attack. "â€¦and you're still an idiot." He finished. Flynn smiled lopsidedly, "Ahh, I'll see you again, I'm sure. You'll never get tired of this life." He said.

Jack's face fell, even if only for a second, before the joking façade was back on again. "You're rightâ€¦ you'll see me again. Just when you're being hauled to jail." He said, laughing, but there was the faintest trace of sadness in his eyes.

That sadness was the only thing I could think about for three days afterwards. We had made it halfway back to the kingdom, and were staying at a small inn (our first since the journey had begun). I could take it no longer. "Jack?" I asked, sitting on a chair in the corner of the room. He looked up from his place on the side of the bed, "Hmm?" The dim light in the room only covered us lightly, for which I was grateful. "I can tell you've been upset these past few days withâ€¦ what Flynn said andâ€¦ me." I told him, finally getting the topic out in the open. Jack let out a shaky sigh, "Hiccup, it's late. Let's just go to sleep." He said. I scowled, "Jack. We need to

talk about this and you know it. I can't stand to see you look so hurtâ€¦ and know it's my fault." I said. He turned around to look at me and his face softened, "It's not your fault, Horrendous."

I frowned, walking over to the side of the bed to sit with him. "I already know you don't like being stuck at the castle. Don't try to lie to me." I said, looking at him from the side. Jack took a deep breath. "That'sâ€¦ I'm going to be honest, that's true. Butâ€¦" He trailed off. "But..?" I asked, inching closer to him. Jack ran a hand through his hair, "But I know you're a prince, and if I ever wanted to go back to this lifeâ€¦ it would mean leaving you and Iâ€¦ don't want that." He said. The words made my heart flutter. "Ohâ€¦" I said, looking down. "That's easily fixed, Jack." I said, leaning my head on his shoulder. "You see, it's _because _I'm a prince that makes this all so very simple. And if by the time I return, my Uncle has succeededâ€¦ I'd be a king. I could grant you anything you wanted." I told him, but quickly added, "I don't mean to sound arrogant. It's just that I want you to be happyâ€¦ and I have the means to give you that."

Jack breathed a sigh. "â€¦Wouldn't you be alone, though?" He asked.

I gulped, "Well, you'd have to visit me frequently, then. _Very _frequently." I told him. Jack's face slowly turned to mine. "You're doing it again." He said. I looked up at him, "What?" I asked. He looked into my eyes, "Faking." He said. The word stabbed right into me as I looked down. "I do not-" "You do." He interrupted, taking my hand from the side of the bed. "Why won't you ever let me see your real face? Why do you put your guard up even for me?" He asked, pulling me forward. I looked down at the ground, "Because Iâ€¦" I bit my lip. Jack looked at me earnestly, "Because you what?" He asked, his eyes burning into my cheeks. "â€¦Because it's easier to be perfect when you're not yourself." I said, turning away ashamed. Jack let go off my hand before placing his on my shoulder. He leaned in close, "Hiccup, you _are _perfect. Not your act. You." He said.

It was as if his words set me free from a cage of my own design. I didn't know how to respond. Jack planted a kiss on the nape of my neck, sliding his hands down the sides of my arms. I stayed quiet. Jack left small kisses all the way down my neck to my collar bone, then back up again. The cycle continued as he moved his hands to my torso, around my chest. He kissed up to my ear, biting down lightly on my earlobe. It sent a sweet shiver down my spine. "Jackâ€¦" I sighed. He silenced me by pulling his hand to the waist of my trousers. "Shhhâ€¦" He whispered into my ear. I bit my lip as his hand travelled lower, touching me. "Jack!" I called, flipping my head around. I was met with Jack's lips, he kissed me softly but intensely, his breaths uneven. I turned my body towards him, sitting on my knees on the bed.

I wrapped my arms around his neck as his free hand caressed my chest. "Nnâ€¦ Jack?" His hand stopped and pulled out from my pants. He kissed me excruciatingly slow as his hands grabbed my hips, then felt behind me. Jack pulled himself closer to me, our chests touching, as his hands roamed over my backside. "Mmm!" He began his advance on my lips again, his tongue swirling against mine. While one hand groped at me, the other went lower, a long finger running in between my legs. I moaned into the kiss, the two sensations making my head go fuzzy. "Mmmm! Jack you-" I couldn't finish the thought as Jack

suddenly moved his hips forward, grinding into me. "A-ah!" I called, unable to hold out the noise. I dug into his back with the pads of my fingers. Jack stopped, bringing one hand up to cup my chin. "Hiccupâ€¦ let me touch you." He said, his eyes dark with lust. I paused for a moment, unsure. Jack pulled my face closer, "Please, Hiccup. I want to see behind the mask for once." He pressed. I took a deep breath, steeling myself.

"â€¦Alright."

Jack smiled, kissing down my jawline to my chin and back up to my lips. While one hand held my head firmly in place, the other snaked down into the front of my trousers again before pulling me out. Jack's fingers glided over it almost teasingly as he bit at my lips. I twisted my hands into his hair as his fingers wrapped around me, moving slowly. The hand that had been on my chin earlier disappeared under my shirt. His cold fingers gave me goosebumps, inching upward until they found what they were looking for. "Mm!" The feeling of Jack's hands moving around me was so exquisite. I let out small gasps each time his hand would move around me. I pulled myself closer to him, using him as support and as a blind for my blushing cheeks. I was growing closer by the second, but all too soon his hand fell away. "Hmm?" I asked, confused and unhappy. He placed some calming kisses on my warm cheek before pulling himself out.

I gasped. It was fully erect, and his breathing heavy. He pressed against my own member, and I unwillingly bucked against him. The hand on my chest pulled my shirt up and over my head before returning to its earlier activity. Jack wrapped his other hand around both of us, the sensation driving me wild. He kissed me roughly this time, his entire body revealing his need. I moved against him, nearing my breaking point. "Ahh! Nnnâ€¦!" Moans seemed escape my lips as if they were a spring. They combined with the wet noises resounding around the room. Jack's lips left mine, his tongue trailing down the front of my neck to my chest, where his mouth began the job of his hand. My head rolled back as the feelings collided. "J-Ah-Nnâ€¦!" He started pumping faster and harder. He rolled his tongue over my nipple, biting and sucking but in such an unpredictable order. I gripped his hair, "Ohâ€¦! Gods, Jack!" My body burning, I came hard with a silent cry. Jack rode me out through my orgasm, coming himself seconds after.

We collapsed on the bed, our arms and legs tangled in each other's. As we were catching our breaths, Jack kissed me lightly on the forehead, cupping my cheek. He looked into my eyes, now half-open in my sated state. "I love you, Hic." He said, a look of satisfaction on his face. If it were possible, I would've blushed more. I curled into him, my arm wrapping around his side. "â€¦I love you too." I told him. Jack ran a hand through my hair, and the dim light and his heartbeat slowly lulled me to sleep.

* * *

><p>The rest of the journey was bliss.<p>

The trip would last only three days after, and they passed by so quickly. I loved having Hiccup by my side while simultaneously having my old life back for a little while.

Eventually, though, we reached the castle city. Hiccup instructed me

that I was absolutely not to put the armor back on going into the castle. People were sure to pay attention to the rescuer of the prince, he said, but that doesn't make me immune to law. We decided we'd tell them the truth, but with some alterations such as "He befriended me in the castle" and "I stole past the guards" which were all technically true. Finally, we reached the castle walls.

As soon as the guards noticed that it was the prince who sat on the back of my horse, they yelled to the others. Hiccup sat up tall behind me. "All of you quiet!" He commanded. They immediately fell silent, confused by the order. Hiccup pointed towards his home, "The one responsible for my disappearance is in the castle at this very moment. I should require no more than three of you to apprehend him. Not a word of my arrival is to leave your lips before I send a messenger to ring the bells. Is that understood?" He called. Internally, I applauded him. I never understood where his princely assertiveness came from when he was normally so quiet. He pointed out three knights to accompany us inside.

We entered the castle without making much of a fuss. None of the servants were outside, and Aster must've been in a garden out of view. We went in uneventfully, the girls (thankfully) nowhere to be seen. Hiccup then led us all the way to the dining hall, pausing at the door to take a steadying breath before pushing it open.

The room went quiet for a moment as the King, Duke Pitch, and Earl Sand all looked up, not believing who it was. Pitch's eyes went wide, his mouth tightening into a frightened, angry scowl. Hiccup turned to the knights without a moment's pause. "Capture Duke Pitch."

The said Duke rose from his chair in a panic, "W-What is the meaning of this, Horrendous?" He yelled, running himself into a wall as the knights advanced. Hiccup's eyes turned to slits. "Don'tâ€¦ Youâ€¦ _Dare _say another word!" He roared, crossing halfway through the room. The knights grabbed Pitch by each arm as he fought against them. Hiccup grabbed ahold of his collar, "_You killed my mother!_" Hiccup spat into his uncle's face, the anger in his eyes burning into the murderer. Pitch continued to struggle against the knights, eventually knocking one of them hard against the wall, shoving Hiccup off. A metal glint sparked my attention as he lunged forward.

"HICCUP!"

* * *

><p>Sorry this one was late, I'm breaking my "no post's on weekdays rule" just this once because I actually had it ready but then my computer went wonky so boo.

Lots of kissy scenes in this one *throws sparkles everywhere* During the first kissy scene in the woods I forgot I had my caps lock on after a roleplay I was doing, so I typed out the whole scene in shouty capitals and then when I looked up all I noticed were the words "I SUCKED DOWN HARDER THAN NORMAL, LEAVING A MARK." and I about died from my laughter. So go read that scene in shouty capitals and make yourself happy. Another thing that happens is each time I write about Jack and kissing and I'm sort of tied all I can seem to think of is Jack thinking "Mmmm yes virgin lips." and that just makes me smile. A lot.

Anywhoo... I had forgotten how much I loved roleplaying as Hiccup, so if any of you are ever in need of a Hiccup (or whatever) RP buddy PM me and we will do great things.

See you lovelies later, *rolls around in the mess of glitter I have made* "Haha... virgin lips..." *Gigglesnort*

9. Chapter 9

Chapter 9

Somehow, I ended up in a bed. I groaned, wincing at the pain in my side.

"Ah! He's awake!" "Prince Horrendous!" "Oh I'm just so happy I could cry!" "Are you in pain?!"

I don't think I'd ever been happier to hear those voices. "Ahâ€| Hello, girls." They all had huge (be they concerned) grins on their faces. Rushing up all at once, they began barraging me with the news that I was absolutely not to stand up. "What happened?" I asked them. Their faces turned sour in an instant. "Dukeâ€| well I suppose he's no longer a Duke nowâ€| but Duke Pitch slit you through the side with a knife!" "We were so worried!" "What if... you hadâ€|" At this point Juliara burst into tears. I fidgeted, unsure of what to do. "T-there, there nowâ€| I'm fine, see? Nothing more to worry about." I gave her an encouraging smile. Juliara wiped the tears from her face. "We areâ€| very, very glad you're home again." She said, giving a small smile. I took a deep breath. That was right, I was homeâ€|

So why did I feel so anxious?

I was left in the bed from dawn 'til dusk. My side hurt. I was so bored. I didn't get to see my uncle's execution (not that I would've wanted to anyways, but it was just the fact that I wasn't allowed). Which reminded me, I had missed my own mother's funeral. I dragged a hand down my face, "And I can't even go to see her graveâ€|" I lamented, sinking further into the mattress.

Tap Tap

Tap Ta-Tap Tap

I flipped over, hissing as I was reminded of the cut in my side. Outside my window, Jack peered through the glass doors. I waved him in, running a hand through my hair as I tried to smooth it down. Jack entered as silent as a mouse, crossing over the room like a shadow before coming to my side. I found arms wrapped tight around my shoulders. "J-Jack? Are you alright?" I asked, hugging him back. "I was so nervousâ€| all dayâ€|" He said, nuzzling my neck. I rubbed my hand in a small circle around his back "I'm fine. I'm sorry you were worried... So how did it go?" I asked him, pulling back and looking into his eyes. Jack shrugged, "They were too preoccupied with Pitch to take much notice of me." He said, lifting himself up onto the side of the bed and leaning his back against the headboard. He softly stroked my hair as I asked, "Soâ€| was itâ€|?" Jack nodded, "It was pretty brutalâ€| I'm glad you didn't have to see that." He said, looking down into my eyes.

"â€|Jack?" I asked. He tilted his head to the side, "Hmm?"

"Iâ€| It doesn't feel quite right. Being back here, I mean. Is that how you've felt this whole time?" I asked, grabbing onto his hand. Jack seemed to pause for a moment. "It's not as bad as the first time I came here. There's still the longing, yes, butâ€| I have something more important here now. And so, I don't want to leave as much if he's not coming with me." He said, bending down to put his forehead on mine. "I don't know what I'd have done if that bladeâ€|" Jack's hand squeezed tighter around mine, and he pressed a small kiss to my temple. "I'm so glad you weren't hurt too badly." He said. I blushed a deep red. "M-me tooâ€|" I told him, tangling our fingers together. He smiled before leaning in to kiss me gently on the lips. "Get some sleep for me, yes?" He instructed, giving my hand another small squeeze before slipping off the bed. "Goodnight, Jack." I said, curling back into the blankets. "Night, love."

When he was gone, I sank into a deep sleep, not quite as restless as before. Two more days passed, and finally I was allowed out of bed. I couldn't do much apart from walk to the dining room and back, therefore I had Jack ride Toothless so he wouldn't be too bored. After a week, the pain lessened more and more until I was back to normal. One day I was called to the throne room for no apparent reason. The things that went on in there almost never had anything to do with me. Confused, I silently entered the long chamber. My father was sitting upon the piece of furniture for which the room was named, his scepter and sword at his side. "Come here, Horrendous." He ordered, clearing his throat loudly. I did as instructed, walking the length of the room to stand in front of him.

"Yes, Father?" I asked, placing my hands behind my back. The king had on a conspiratorial grin, as if he was waiting to tell me the most perfect of jokes. "I'd like you to sit beside me. We have something important to discuss before-" He was interrupted by the signature knock of Earl Sand. "Enter!" My Father bellowed. Into the throne room poured many aristocrats and a few high nights.

The last one to enter the room was Jack.

I took a seat in the throne that used to belong to Mother, "Your Highness," The High Knight, Dour, began. "I present to you Jackson Overland Frost, liberator of the prince, and the man who single-handedly found and rescued him." He introduced Jack, pushing the white haired boy forward. "Ahem." My father stood up and waved a hand to signal Jack forward. "Come here, my boy, come." He told him. Jack walked forward with wide eyes. I assumed he knew just as little about what he was doing there as I did. "Jackson Frost. You have done the kingdomâ€| and Iâ€| a great service, which must have come with its sacrifices." My father pulled his sword from its sheath. "In light of this, I have called you here to give you a reward for your valor and fortitude. Please, kneel." My eyes popped open. Jack got shakily to his knees, just as surprised as I was. "Jackson Overland Frost. Honesty, loyalty, and bravery. Do you swear to uphold these virtues of the Kingdom of Berk?"

Jack swallowed and looked up, "I do." My father gave a small smile, before placing the tip of his sword lightly to his right shoulder, then his left. "I dub thee honorary knight of Berk. Rise, Sir Frost." Jack straightened himself back up again as a soft applause echoed

around the room. I clapped loudly (but not obnoxiously) with the largest grin on my face. After it had finally registered to Jack what had just happened, one of the most beautiful smiles broke out on his face. He looked at me where I sat and gave me a quick wink. I tried desperately not to blush. Dour pulled Jack back into the crowd as my father coughed to silence their applause.

"Now, there is one more thing I would like to announce. Horrendous, would you stand?" He asked me, turning around. I nodded slightly before moving up to his side. My father coughed some more, only this time it didn't sound as if it were meant to simply clear his throat. "I have some most excellent news. As you all know, within a week's time my son shall turn nineteen. There will be a ball to celebrate, and many of you have already expressed your need to extend your stay until then. This however, is not the good news. One of the last decisions the late queen (Gods rest her soul) and I made was an agreement involving our son. On the night of the ball, a special young woman from the kingdom of Kerk will be visiting. King Fergus and Queen Elinor have offered up their eldest daughter, Princess Merida, to be the wife of our own High Prince Horrendous III!"

My smile dropped like a rock into the floor, dragging my stomach along.

The applause around me was muffled and my vision blurred. "â€|What?" I breathed, before everything turned upside-down.

* * *

><p>Hiccup collapsed in a heap on the floor. "Hic!" I reached out and took a step forward to help, but the Head Knight blocked my way. "Everyone stay back!" He cried, rushing over to Hiccup's side. He felt for a pulse as the King began his ritual of yelling at everything again. My fists shook at my side. No, no, NO! We had already executed the bastard! This couldn't be happeningâ€| he just got backâ€| I hated standing there, being forced to wait as I wondered what had become of the boy I loved. Why was it taking him so damn long to find a heartbeat?! I knew that sound better than anyone else in the world. I would be able to find it without even trying. "Hiccupâ€|" I took another step forward, but found my arm pulled back. I flipped my head around to see Aster's face. "Come with me." He said, his voice strained and his eyes tense.<p>

He dragged me out of the room by the wrist until we reached a door outside into one of the gated gardens. "Nobody will be out here." He told me. I looked at him in awe. "How are you so calm?!" I almost yelled at him, tears stinging at the edges of my eyes. Aster narrowed his already dark eyes "What do you mean?" He asked. I ruffled an angry hand through my hair, "You know exactly what I mean! You're his father!" I said, immediately wishing I could retract the words. Aster's body went slack as he collapsed backwards onto a bench. "Youâ€| How do ya know about that? How did Horrendous know?" He asked, his breathing uneven. I shook my head. "Hiccup doesn't know anythingâ€| as far as I know, anyway. I think I'm the only oneâ€| except for maybe one or two of the maids who have only guessed." I said, leaning against a shade tree.

Aster rubbed circles into his temples. "Alrightâ€| alright. How did you find out?" He asked, glaring up at me. I rolled my eyes. "You should learn not to spill your deep dark secrets without checking to

make sure the garden you're in is empty." I said, pushing my side into the tree. Aster dragged his hands across his face, "You can't tell anyone." He told me, his eyes pleading. "Hiccup's world would flip upside down. He'd no longer be the Crown Prince. His motherâ€¦ Valâ€¦ would be disgraced. I'd be executed. The kingdom would have no heir. We'd be invaded and without someone to take over the throneâ€¦" Aster's face was sad and heavy. The burden he'd had to carry alone through all of the years visibly weighed him down. It was obvious he wanted to be Hiccup's father, but that could never be. I pushed myself away from the tree, sitting beside him on the bench. "I never would." I assured him, twirling my fingers around themselves. "You knowâ€¦" I turned to him, leaning my elbows on my knees. "Hiccup sees _you _as his father, not the king." I told him, trying to cheer him up. "Asterâ€¦ What if he'sâ€¦?" Aster shook his head. "Don't."

I swallowed, and wiped hard at my eyes. I hid my face with my hands. What was I going to do ifâ€¦?

* * *

><p>"â€¦Hi~~â€¦"<p>

"â€¦.Hic~~
C~~~~?"

â€¦|

Huh?

"Hiccup~~~Ca~~~ear~e?"

Whatâ€¦?

"Hiccupâ€¦ Pleaseâ€¦ Can you hear me?"

My eyes fluttered open, leaving me with a blurred vision of my chamber. I was instantly wrapped in familiar arms. "Oh Gods, Hicâ€¦ Please tell me you're alrightâ€¦ Pleaseâ€¦" Jack hugged me uncomfortably tight, but I reached an arm up around his middle and tried to pull myself up. He helped me into a sitting position, all the while never letting his grip lessen. I felt numb. A tear rolled down my cheek. "Noâ€¦" I gripped at his robes, pressing my face into his shoulder. Jack wrapped his warm hand around the back of my head. "What are we going to do?" I asked, my voice cracking as sobs escaped my lips. Wedding? Since when had they been planning such a thing? I'd never even met the girl and- "Shhhâ€¦" Jack said, stroking my hair. "We don't have to think about that right now. Justâ€¦ calm downâ€¦" Jack sat there and held me while I continued to wet the fabric on his shoulder. Eventually my sobs softened and we just sat there in each other's arms. The silence wasn't uncomfortable, it was more like the calm before the storm. I knew, but I didn't want to admit it.

Jack soon eased his hold around my waist and looked down at me with sad eyes. I didn't want those eyes. I wanted the eyes right after he'd tripped and fallen on me. I wanted the eyes when he'd fooled me in the forest. I wanted the eyes as we were pursued by two redheaded ruffians. That wasn't like him. That wasn't the boy I loved, and that made it harder. I put my hands on the sides of his face. "I only just got you backâ€¦" He said, leaning into one of my palms, holding it there with his own hand. "D-don't talk as if it's already overâ€¦" I

stuttered, wincing at the words. Jack pulled my hands down from his face, cradling them in his own. "Hiccupâ€¦ you're getting marriedâ€¦" He said, defeated. "Butâ€¦ That'sâ€¦ It's not my choice!" I argued, close to tears. Jack nodded. "I know, Hiccupâ€¦ I know." He said, standing up at the side of the bed. "Jack?!" I threw the covers off of my legs, scrambling out from under them. Jack placed a small kiss to the top of my head.

"This is the last time you'll see me." He said, his face rigid and resolute.

I sat speechless for a moment as he turned away and walked towards the glass doors. By the time it finally registered to me what he had meant, he was already out on the balcony. I threw myself out of bed faster than ever before, sprinting across the floor and out onto the balcony where Jack prepared to climb down. I caught him across the middle. "No! Pleaseâ€¦ Please don't goâ€¦" I begged him. He didn't turn around. "I have to, Horrendous." He said, his voice shaking. I held him there for a moment, trying to think of anything to make him stay.

"â€¦Hold me." I said, nuzzling my face into his back. "If it's the last timeâ€¦ then please..." I couldn't finish out the rest of the sentence, but it got him to turn around. He sighed, "H-Hiccup I-" "Shhh..." I interrupted him, grabbing one of the hands at his side and kissing him on the neck. "_Please?_" I whispered, my voice pleading. "Please please pleaseâ€¦" I wrapped my arms tight around his neck. He gave a shaky breath, but finally enveloped me lightly his arms. "â€¦Alright." He said, taking another deep breath. "Alright." He kissed along my cheek and up to my lips. The first few kisses were light, tender, and careful. It was as if he was still leaving himself room to run if he had any second thoughts. I grabbed onto his collar, trying desperately to deepen the kiss. Jack shifted, like he'd been startled by the advance. He must've accepted it, however, because our lips soon started to move together like they had in the inn. Releasing a large unsteady breath, he pulled away and looked at my eyes for a moment.

His thumb brushed across my cheek as he pressed his forehead to mine. "â€¦You're making me want to stay." He said, the same sadness in his eyes. I caught his hand, holding it with mine. "Then stay." I told him. My reflection was caught in his eyes for another moment before he closed them.

"No." He said, pulling his hand away. "â€¦No." My breath caught, "J-Jackâ€¦" I tried to reach for him, but he only pushed my hand away. "I love you, Hiccup. But..." Jack leaned on the edge of the banister. "If we go any further, things will only get harder." He said, and even though it killed me to think so, he was right. "J-just promise me one thing." I said, in a last effort. Jack turned to me, "Anything."

I clung onto the material of my nightshirt, "Then, promise me you'll stay until my birthdayâ€¦ just until my birthday and thenâ€¦ please." I tried to hold back my tears as his jaw set into a tight line. He pinched the bridge of his nose between his forefinger and thumb. "â€¦Why? It's only going to make it more difficult, Horrendousâ€¦" He said. I shook my head. "We've barely had any time to think this through, Jack. Perhapsâ€¦ perhaps there's something to be done after all and we just haven't thought of it yet." I tried to convince him,

taking two tentative steps towards him. Jack sighed. "Fine, until your birthday, but after that!" He turned away, "After that, you have to let me go." Before I had time to say anything else, he flipped himself over the banister, climbing the wall to the garden down below.

I felt as if the floor beneath me were a ghost. I couldn't feel it as I stumbled back towards my bed. I sat in the same position for what felt like eternities on end trying to think through my situation. Without my noticing it, Isanna had entered the room. She walked in and told me breakfast was ready. I dressed and combed myself into what I believed a person must look like. Downstairs, my father was already eating. The girls looked to be in no better disposition than myself, their cheeks lacking their usual rosy glow and their smiles nowhere to be seen. I didn't take my seat. I waited for him to notice my presence before speaking. "Father, I do not wish to be married." Everyone's breath stilled as I stood, waiting for a reaction. The king finally tilted his head a bit to the right. "You what?" He asked, his eyes narrowing. I gulped, "I have no desire to marry this princess you've found."

My father slowly stood up from the table, "And what, exactly, makes you think you have a choice in the matter?" He growled, watching me as my hands curled into fists at my side. "I should be able to at least choose my own bride." I said, immediately wishing for a change of words. My father straightened his back, wiped his mouth, and pushed in his chair. "You're exactly like your mother." He said, yet not a hint of affection was tied to the sentence. "I didn't want to marry her either, you know." My eyes widened in surprise. Stoick walked slowly, menacingly towards me. "The reason I took your mother's hand was solely to produce an heir and even at that she failed me. She gave me this instead." He gestured at me with something close to disgust in his eyes. All of the assistants took a step back in fear. The words fell hot on my ears. I pulled my lips into a tight line. "She didn't deserve someone like you." I spat out, the words cutting like a knife through the small room.

It felt as if the air were breaking when my father took a brisk, powerful step in my direction. I felt his large palm collide with my chest, forcing the air out of my lungs as I fell to the ground. I attempted to scramble up, but his foot reversed my action, pinning me down. Looking to my left, I noticed for the first time a head of white hair clothed in armor next to the head knight. My father looked upon me from above. "You're right." He said, pushing down so that I couldn't breathe. "She deserved that bastard of a gardener which produced the likes of you."

His foot left my chest. Coughing, my mind was awash with confusion. I rolled myself back up into a kneeling position as the king turned away from me. "The kingdom will fall under your reign!" He said, walking out of the room without another glance in my direction. No one said a word as I sat idle for a moment, taking it all in. I stood up, brushed myself off, and turned away from the assistants. "Girls..." I breathed. They stood up a little taller, "Yes?" They replied in unison. "Don't bother fetching me for lunch today." I told them, turning on my heel and exiting the room through a door that led to the ballroom. My steps echoed off the cold marble as I made my escape through the door to the lily garden.

Aster turned around a few minutes after my silent arrival. "Hiccup?"

What's wrong?" he asked, concern blanketing his features. I set my head high. "Asterâ€¦" I began. My eyebrows pushed together, "You've been hiding something from me." It was not so much a statement as it was a question. Aster's face blanched, "Whatâ€¦?" He asked, trying to feign nonchalance. I took a few steps forward as I readied myself and took a deep breath.

"You're my fatherâ€¦ aren't you?"

* * *

><p>Ok don't kill me just yet for the month-long late update. Computers hate me, alright?

Good to be back, though, even if it's only to crush your feels.

10. Chapter 10

Chapter 10

I stared up at the ceiling of my room, counting the cracks. There were still five more days left until Hiccup's birthday. Since becoming a knight, my waking hours had been filled with training, so my mind was occupied most of the day by fighting and something of an education in war they thought might come in handy. It was excruciatingly boring since I'd seen more wars than many due to my travels and I already knew how to fight against knights and other thieves alike.

â€¦I wanted to run.

My palms were practically itching at my sides, yearning for the familiar grip of reins. The only problem was, I wanted outâ€¦ but I didn't really want to _leave_. I sighed, rolling over to face the dark wall beside me. I'd tried to go to bed early and escape from reality for the rest of the night, but sleep would not come, especially with people still chatting and milling about in the halls before bedtime. There was much gossip to be heard about the events of the breakfast a few days prior. I groaned in remembrance of the king's refusal. The worst part was, I couldn't even comfort Hiccup afterward. In fact, I had tried my hardest to avoid him. Why couldn't he have just let me go? It was obvious that there would be no way around the betrothal. I scratched at my head in the dark, tugging on my hair as if it would somehow bring an idea to the surface. Deep down I knew, though. There was nothing to be done, and it was time for me to leave.

The noise in the hall slowly died down, but sleep still wouldn't come. I stared at the empty expanse of the ceiling, the cracks nowhere seen in the absence of light. The familiar feeling of having too much to think about was back in full force. I hadn't felt it since my time spent in the dungeon. How funny, I thought, that in just a few months, I went from being a most wanted criminal to the prince's knight in shining armor. There was no part of me left untouched by my time spent with him. I flipped onto my stomach, burying my face in the pillow. What was I still doing here? Promise or no promiseâ€¦ it would be better for us both if I left.

There came a tap on my shoulder.

I flipped my head up in surprise. Hiccup was standing there in his nightshirt with a candle again. For a moment, it was as if nothing had ever happened, and he was just there to spend the night as usual. I looked up at him in confusion. He put a finger up to his lips, silencing my unsaid question. Still baffled, I sat up in bed, but he shook his head and climbed in beside me, blowing out the candle as he did so. I heard the soft clink of the holder hitting my bedside table. Finally I couldn't take it anymore. "What are you doing here?" I whispered. I could hear his small sigh beside me. "â€|You were going to leave tonight."

He said it with such finality, as if he'd read my thoughts. "You don't know that." I told him, neither denying nor confirming his suspicions. Hiccup slid his hand into mine underneath the covers. "I saw it in the way you walked, in your eyes and voice. It's like you're distant. Even though you're still hereâ€| you're not." He said, and I could hear the hurt seeping into his words. Wincing, I replied, "Well what else am I supposed to do, Horrendous?! You know just as well as I that there's no way out of this." I said, glowering into the darkness. Hiccup's breath hitched for a moment.

"So you thinkâ€| Come to my room, I have an idea." He said, slipping out from under the blanket. He opened the door to my room so quietly that if there hadn't been a certain amount of moonlight seeping in through a crack in the hallway ceiling, I wouldn't have been able to tell he'd done it.

I rolled out of bed, landing lithely before following him out. He led me through hallways and ballrooms on a path only he could remember from years spent traversing the halls. The entire time I found myself second guessing his judgment. Each noise was a guard or an insomniac royal. Eventually, though, we reached his quarters. As soon as the door was shut, my mouth opened. "Plan?" I asked him, wanting to get whatever it was done as quickly as possible since I didn't want to lose my resolve. Hiccup slowed my pace, however, dallying as he walked to the edge of his large bed.

His face reminded me of the time we'd spoken of philosophy while riding. It was a sort of light but settled pondering. For a few moments I stood there in silence while he retracted into his thoughts and sat upon the side of the bed. I took a deep breath, exhaling heavily. There would be no speaking to him while he was in that state, I'd just have to wait until he came up out of it. Wandering around, I spotted a bottle of wine on a small table near an armoire, along with the same glasses we'd sipped from the night we had officially become loversâ€| A small smile came to my face despite the sharp pain in my heart.

"Alright."

I turned around, "Horrendous?" He nodded his head a little, then sat up straight. "Hiccup?" I asked again. He blinked and looked back at me as he stood. He just stared at me for a moment, his lips tucked inward as if he were afraid of his next words. I raised an eyebrow in question as he shifted his weight towards me. "What is it?" I asked, taking a closer look at his expression. It was a look of determination mixed with nervous excitement.

"Jackâ€¦ run away with me."

I saw Jack's face go from its usual blank façade, to confusion, to surprise, and finally "oh-Gods-what?!" as he took a few steps away. "Horrendousâ€¦ you can't be serious." He said, a crease forming on his forehead. I swallowed, "I am." He looked over me incredulously, rubbing his temple, "And where, exactly, do you plan to go?" He asked. I shrugged my shoulders, "Whereverâ€¦ you know how to stay hidden. We could make it Jack, I know we could!" I said, before another thought occurred to me and my face fell. "â€¦ Orâ€¦ you don't want to?" I asked. His face went through another range of emotions before saying, "Hiccupâ€¦ You've lived in the lap of luxury since you were young, and I've only shown you the good parts of the outside worldâ€¦ you haven't even glanced at the bad. You belong here, Horrendous, and you know it." He said, pinching the bridge of his nose, "Run awayâ€¦ What are you even saying?" He asked. I set my jaw firm and looked back up to his face.

"I'm saying I'd rather be with you!"

I was almost yelling, speaking only as loud as the echo would permit me without waking anyone. "I've grown up with riches my entire lifeâ€¦ and never, not once, have I been as happy surrounded by them as I have been with you. The world outside the castle should've been horrible, but you made it the best experience of my entire life. Andâ€¦ I don't have to hide with you. You see, if you left me I'd be all aloneâ€¦ and unlike you, I can't run away from here. I'm stuck. And I'll be stuck for the rest of my life just like-" I sucked in a deep, pained breath, "-Just like my mother. I can't do that, Jack. So with or without you, I'm leaving."

The ultimatum was a complete lie, but how else was I supposed to convince him? I held my breath, hoping that he wouldn't notice my dishonesty. His face was still hardened, but it soon relaxed. "Hiccup, I don't know. If we were caught-"

Before he could finish, I hushed him, "We won't. You know we won't and the only reason you're still faltering is because you're afraid for me." I told him, grabbing his wrist.

"â€¦ But I'm not afraid. I won't be scared of anything if you're by my side- I promise."

The small speech left me winded, even though it was but a few phrases long. I looked down at my feet once more, awaiting yet another denial. Above me Jack was silent as a church. Losing him wasn't an option. I'd sooner be sent to my mother's side in the ground than have him disappear on me.

Jack let out a great sigh before I felt his head lay on top of mine. "Godsâ€¦ Why do you keep making this so _difficult?_" He asked, gripping at my other wrist. I blinked in surprise, tilting my head up so my forehead was touching his. "Because you'd leave if I didn't." I tell him, my voice barely above a whisper. "Jack," I started out, threading my fingers into his. "Iâ€¦ love you too much for that."

Jack's stark blue eyes reached into the depths of mine as he thought. Without meaning to, I ended up memorizing his entire face in those few seconds, saving itâ€¦ just in case.

"One weekâ€|" He mused, more to himself than to me. "One week until the wedding, correct?" He asked. My face fell, "Jack there's not going to be a wedding, I already told y-" He put a finger up to my lips to silence me. "Just answer the question, Hiccup." He said, looking playfully put-off. That was a good face. Why had he said that with a good face? "â€|Yes. One week is when my father has planned for there to be a wedding." I told him, guardedly.

He nodded. "Alright, then. Then in a weeks' time- the night before the wedding- we'll leave." He said.

My eyes went wide. "Truly?! You'll come with me?" I asked, clutching his arms. He brought a hand up to push a bit of hair from my eyes. "Unfortunately, yes. You really have no idea how dangerously captivating you are." He said, wrapping his hand around the back of my neck. I let out a shaky laugh, "Ah, thank Gods. I was sure you'dâ€| I mean I could have sworn you wouldn'tâ€| and then I-" I babbled incoherently in relief.

"Your eloquence has left you, my prince." He said, drawing a finger teasingly across my jawline. It set my skin on fire. "T-that's not fair." I told him, becoming painfully aware of his bare torso. His free hand slid across my waist, tauntingly. "What's not fair?" He asked, a small smirk on his lips. "This. The way you make me beg to keep you and then youâ€| do something like this," I said. His smirk grew larger. "Something likeâ€| what? You're still not making and good sense, Hiccup." He said, his hand shifting lower on my back and drawing me forward.

"Ah!" I let out a small yelp as he bit lightly at my neck. He walked me gently to the bed until the back of my bare legs touched the mattress. Without warning, Jack flung my shoulders to the bed with a swift push. I barely had time to react before he climbed up as well, leaning above me. "Jack?" I asked, unsure what my voice sounded like.

He clasped both of my hands above my head with just one of his and leaned down to where his face almost touched mine. "You know, sometimes you forget that you fell in love with a dangerous man." He said, using his free hand to trace a line down from my chest to my navel with his fingers. "Do you know how many hours I've spent this past week trying not to think of you like this? It was hell." He said, his hand traveling to my hip. He lowered his lips to my ear, "_Horrendous_."

The word sent shivers down my spine.

Suddenly I wished the hand binding mine would release, I wanted to touch him. I pressed up against his hand, but to no avail. Jack just shook his head against my neck. "Tonight you're _mine_, your highness." With that he gave a prompt nip to my shoulder as his free hand pulled at the collar of my nightshirt. "Jack, Ple-"

"Don't speak." He said, placing a second, rougher bite to the space between my shoulder and neck. He dragged his teeth across my collarbone while his hand found its way to the hem of my nightshirt. I felt his fingers crawl up my thigh, coming daringly close, and then pulling away. I couldn't stifle the small moan of disapproval that escaped my lips.

"I thought I told you to be quiet, didn't I? Or are you pining for a punishment this early already?" He asked.

I knew it should've startled me, that words like punishment should've made me want to push him away. But instead, they spread like liquid fire through me. I felt every little touch more. His hand, moving back up to my chest. His fingers, softly grazing along the fabric of my nightshirt. His lips, working their way up my neck, warm breaths caressing the skin there. Everything had been intensified, just like it had been the night we had spent at the Inn.

I bit my lip to keep from making any further noise (for what little good it did). Jack kept up the pattern of tease-and-release so many times I lost count. It was infuriating. All the while, he had on this smug grin like he knew exactly what I was thinking.

Knock! Knock! Knock!

"_Oh, by the Saints!_" Jack muttered under his breath, flipping onto his side and falling onto the floor with a muted thud. I heard him scuttle underneath the bed just before clearing my throat to answer the knock. "Yes?" I asked, quickly straightening my nightshirt and jumping under the covers. The door opened. Behind it stood Isanna and Juliara. They entered the room quietly, "Sorry to interrupt, my prince, butâ€¦ is everything alright? We heard quite the racket and came to see." Isanna said. Juliara nodded, "Were you having a fright?"

I pulled on a small smile as I replied, "No, girls. Sorry to have woken you. Everything is fine." I told them. They didn't look very convinced. "Is that so? Very well, then. Would you like anything before we leave?" she asked. I shook my head, "No, thank you."

They both gave each other a worried glance before bowing slightly. "Then, good-night, Prince Horrendous." Juliara said. "Good-night, girls." I said. Once they had shut the door behind them, I let out a large sigh. Jack crawled out from under the bed again. He flopped his head on the side of the bed to look at me, the rest of his body still on the rug below. "I am going to kill them." He said simply, put-off by the intrusion. I chuckled lightly. "No, don't do that. It'll be a lot harder to justify getting you out of jail that way." I told him. He smirked and stood up before crawling to the center of the bed where I reclined.

I made my way over to Hiccup slowly before reaching him. His eyes widened as I climbed atop him, pinning him to the pillows. "Now, where were we?" I asked, rubbing my hand over the covers above his thigh. "J-Jack?" He asked. "Hmm?"

"Notâ€¦ um, not tonight?"

I my hand stopped cold. "What?" I asked. He looked as if he had been enjoying it. Was he afraid one of the girls would hear? We could fix thatâ€¦

"It's just," He started, sitting up slightly and laying a hand on my shoulder, "How do I know you really won't leave me in the morning? This way, if I give you something to look forward too, I'll have some kind of assurance you won't go back on your word." He said, wrapping

his arms around my neck. I sighed. Despite how annoying it was, I found it endearing.

But I wouldn't let him get away that easy.

"Fine. I won't touch you tonightâ€| but am I still allowed to kiss you?" I asked. Hiccup blushed, "I g-guess that would be alrightâ€|" He said. I smiled and climbed under the covers beside him, "Then close your eyes for me?" I asked. He swallowed and did as I told him to. His hands were shaking. How cuteâ€|

With his eyes then closed, I wrapped a hand around his waist and pulled him swiftly on top of me. His eyes popped open, but before he could protest, I pressed my lips roughly to his. "Mmh!" He groaned as my lips attacked his, barely giving him time to breathe. Our legs tangled under the covers as he tried to get away. I used one hand to hold the arm propping him up in place on the mattress as I shifted us into a sitting position. Hiccup straddled my hips as I took both of his hands in mine, holding them between our chests. After a few more sighs of involuntary pleasure escaped him, I slid his hands to my shoulders before moving my own hands to his hips. He no longer protested, letting my tongue roam around his mouth. Every once in a while, I'd lightly nip at his lips, keeping him focused.

Considering him thoroughly exhausted by only kissing, I let him breathe for a moment. He laid his head on my shoulder, "Jack, you don't play fair at all." He told me. I smirked, leaving a small kiss on his forehead. "That's what you get for picking a thief." I told him. He chuckled slightly before sliding off my lap and under the covers again. "Want to keep me company for a while longer?" He asked. I smiled. Even if hhe didn't realize it himself, I knew what he actually meant by the words. If I stayed with him there would be no way for me to escape, but I wasn't planning on leaving anymore. I straightened the covers out over both of us and pulled him close. "Alright."

I woke up to the sound of the girls knocking on my door. "Prince Horrendous?" They called, their voices muffled by the wood. Snapping awake, I looked around for Jack, but he was nowhere in sight. With a small sigh of disappointment, I sat up and answered them. "Yes, girls."

Susalina and Elizabell poked their heads through the doorway and entered. "Good Morning, Prince Horrendous. Do you need anything?" They asked. I shook my head, throwing some hair out of my eyes, "No thank you." I said. They nodded and curtsied slightly before leaving the room once more. I threw the covers off my legs and slid off the edge of the bed when my foot collided with something fleshy.

"Wahh!" I screamed, squirming back on top of the bed. Below me, Jack let out a yelp of his own as he sprung up from the floor. "Oh, Hiccupâ€| it's only you. By the saints that scared meâ€|" He said, rubbing his eyes. "What were you doing on the floor?" I asked, still recovering from my own fright. "Ah, I was too tired to climb down the balcony last night so I decided to sleep on the rug where the girls wouldn't see me." He said. I shook my head, "When did you decide to do that?" I asked him. He looked up towards the ceiling, running a hand through his hair. "Um, around the time you finally nodded off."

I leaned up against the headboard of the bed. "Well I hope it was comfy enough. You really should've told me, you know. I would have-" I tried to say, but he interrupted me with, "There are some perks to waking up like this, though." He said, climbing over the bed to where I sat. "For instance, I get to do this." He said, leaning in and giving me a small peck on the lips as he wrapped his arms around my torso. I smiled. "Yesâ€¦ that's pretty nice." I said, hugging him around the waist. We stayed like that for a while, just talking, until he said the head knight would probably be looking for him and he left the room.

Which left me alone with my thoughts and worries, the main one (now that I was somewhat convinced Jack wouldn't leave) being Aster.

When I had confronted him on the subject the day before, he was reluctant to admit it. The truth finally came to the surface, however, and I realized that all of those times I had wished to be born as some peasants son, I actually had been. If anything, it was a relief, though I didn't know why. Perhaps that was why I never seemed to be as good at all of my princely duties as I should have been? Noâ€¦ it was more like it was because I was released from something, whatever "something" was. No matter the reason, it was as if I'd been unshackled. I rose and dressed, pacing down the cool hall towards the dining hall. A few other nobles had already risen and were gathering in small groups in the halls to talk about this-or-that, all of them stopping to say good morning as I passed.

It had been a while since I'd been in such a good mood. That was, until I reached the dining room and realized that my father would be inside. But that would be fine, right? Surely there were other nobles breakfasting with him so he wouldn't say something terribly brash. Bracing myself, I walked into the dining room. As I'd predicted, there were other nobles in the room. My father looked up from a conversation with the head knight, and though it threw me off-guard, what surprised me more was that Jack was sitting beside him. Using that as an excuse to avoid my father, I spoke to Jack instead. "So you'll be joining us this morning, Sir Frost?" I asked, the words falling awkwardly off my tongue at the new title. He smiled lightly. "Yes, from today on I'll be Knight Dour's personal attendant." He said. My eyes widened, "That quickly? You must be even better than we thought." I said, nodding to the high knight, who cleared his throat. "Yes, Sir Frost has shown a unique talent for our 'trade'. It's as if he were born for it." He said. Jack and I shared a secret smile over the comment, knowing full well what he was actually born to do.

"So, Horrendous." My father started, staring me down. "Have you finally decided to put aside your childlike tantrum over the marriage?" He asked, frowning slightly. I swallowed, "I have decided to stop arguing with you about it in public, if that's what you mean." I told him, "However, that still doesn't mean I accept it." I added, knowing full well the grave I was digging for myself. Stoick grimaced and opened his mouth to yell at me again. "I'll kindly remind you that there are women in the room, my king. Let us not interrupt their cheery disposition, yes?" I asked him, sending a warning look straight in his eye. He backed down sorely, still scowling. I looked over at Jack, who sent me my own warning look. We finished breakfast with a bit of small talk about the current state of affairs and such.

When breakfast was over, the head knight and Jack excused themselves

to go do other things, and before my father could strike up another conversation with me, I excused myself as well.

The days seemed to continue on like this for about a week. I avoided my father as much as possible, only speaking with him if it was absolutely necessary. Every day came a new lesson, something last-minute that I would need to learn before my birthday.

My birthday.

It drew ever closer, and though I knew what I wanted, I couldn't help but to be nervous. I would be leaving the castle walls permanently, fleeing the country, and leaving everyone I'd ever known behind me. However, as much as all of that pained me, the thought of marrying someone else and having Jack leave me—the answer was obvious as to what I had to do. The days passed quickly with all that had to be done to prepare for the wedding that wouldn't take place. The girls became increasingly sour as the date crept sooner. I did my best to keep them happy through the fittings and such. Of course, it didn't help that they were asked to prepare the room that Princess Merida would reside in. I wondered if they would intentionally forget the towel.

The week passed in a blur, and before I knew it, the day had come for the princess and her family to arrive. The other nobles had been approaching me earlier that morning at irregular intervals asking me what I thought of the marriage. Avoiding the question, I simply answered, "Well I haven't met her so I have no right to decide yet." Finally the time came though, and the guard watching the gate announced the arrival of the royal family of Kerk. I straightened my tunic as I waited by the door with everyone else. It was expected that the king and I be the first to see them to the door, so we stood at the front of the line as the carriage came to a stop.

For a moment, there was silence as everyone held their breath.

Then the door opened, and King Fergus stepped out, helping Queen Elinor behind him. Stoick welcomed them heartily as everyone else stood by, waiting to see the face of the woman I was to "marry". She didn't appear, however. King Fergus noticed this after a moment and turned back towards the coach. "Merida, do come along." He said. "I will not!" a small voice yelled from inside. The other nobles stood aback with surprised faces while I merely smiled. This would be interesting. "Merida." Her mother said sternly, and there came no retort. Finally, she moved towards the door, her wild mop of curly red hair framing her face. I thought she was about to get out, but instead she simply said. "I will not be married!" and slammed the door to the carriage.

This would continue for an entire hour.

I couldn't help but laugh after a few minutes, the other nobles looking at me strangely, before I told them that it would probably be better if we all waited inside for the royal family to join us. Inside, I found myself somehow alone with Jack. "Well," He started, "At least we know you won't be leaving behind some poor brokenhearted girl, yes?" He asked, smiling into his drink. I let out a small chuckle and nodded. "While I know that I'm not the only person that doesn't wish to be married to a complete stranger. Who'd have thought?" I asked. Our small chat was interrupted as we found

ourselves within hearing distance of a group of noble daughters who were gossiping about Princess Merida. I rolled my eyes. "Honestlyâ€¦" I said, knowing Jack had heard it as well. He nodded. "Ah, _women_. Aren't you glad you picked a man instead?" He asked, winking at me. I blushed but nodded, "I'd pick you even if you were a troublesome woman." I said, flicking his arm.

Before he could reply, the doors opened and the room quieted as the princess and her family entered. I sat my glass down on a table and went to stand near my father. Merida's hair was in a tussle, probably from the fight they must've had to get her out of the carriage. She glared at me as the Kings exchanged niceties once more. I smiled slightly at her, but her frown only deepened. Before anyone could realize what she was doing, she crossed the room towards me and thrust a finger at my face. "I want you to get one thing through your mind, _Prince Horrendous_. I have no want or even remote desire to marry you. Is that clear?" She asked.

Despite my usual polite faÃ§ade, I couldn't help myself.

"Oh, really?" I asked her, "That's funny because, you see, I feel the exact same way."

Our parents stared at us with a look of astonishment, amazed that we would go so far as to say such things. It took a while for my words to sink into Merida's head, but eventually she put her finger down and gave a small smile.

"Is that so? Well, that's good then." She said.

I laughed, at least we'd get along for the one day we were together.

I'm baaaaaaaack!

Hiatus = officially over.

I finally have a little bit of free time so I've been writing vast amounts of fanfic instead of essays *Laughs Nervously*

Anyway, be on the lookout for a new story on my page coming soon titled "Tell Me You Love Me" (Yes there's supposed to be no space in between the first two words :P) It's the Hijack collab I mentioned working on earlier with the lovely HoneyBeez (Check out her profile, she's a cute patoot)

In other news,

_REQUESTS ARE OPEN!__ (weeeeeee!)_

This story is slowly and sadly coming to an end and I thought it would be fun to hear some of the things you guys want to see in the near future because you guys tend to be pretty cool in the idea department. Mainly I'm planning on one-shots for this but who knows, if I like your idea well enough I might make it into a full-length story.

_Anyway, thanks for being patient :) Also, just as a heads-up I might take another break close to Christmas because I'm having a heart surgery. (Don't freak out, sweets, I'll live) But be nice to me until

then :)_

_P.S. If you read through this entire A/N you are the _

And thanks.

11. RAFFLE WOO!

Ok so I know this chapter has been SUPER DUPER EXTREMELY LATE, yes. It will be out on SATURDAY.

Now that that's been announced, I want to tell you about a thing. I've done this thing before on DeviantArt so woo yee I thought I might try it out here.

****I'M HAVING A RAFFLE!****

Here's how this works:

1. You either PM me or leave a review on this update or the update on Saturday
2. This review/PM will contain the keyword MEEKYHIJACK
3. You do this thing whilst signed into your account or leaving me a way to contact you
4. I write usernames on pretty pieces of Hello Kitty paper
5. I drop pieces of paper into my TARDIS cookie jar that makes the cool whooshy timey noise and shake it
6. I pull out three pieces of paper
7. If I pull out your name, you win! :D *applause and confetti*

...

So that's really all there is to it.

I WILL ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS THE DAY I POST THE FINAL CHAPTER OF TAoTaH

(That's the update after the one that's happening Saturday AKA chapter 13)

So what do you get if you win?

YOU GET A FREE COMMISSION FIC!

****PRIZES:****

first place- If you win this, you get a full three-chapter Hijack fic OR three full oneshots based on your request. You also get an author follow and favorite on your profile from me.

second place- If you win this, you get two full oneshots OR one hella long monster oneshot based on your request.

third place- If you win this, you get one medium-length oneshot based on your request.

(I would also be willing to write your OC's if you can give me their general description and backstory)

So there.

Go do the thing.

It'll be fun, I promise.

dances around keyboard

12. Chapter 11

Quick note: Line breaks will be indicated by the -.-.-.-.- symbol because FF decided to be stupid and not give me the line break button

Chapter 11

It. Was. Hell.

All of the nobles had gathered in the ballroom to gossip about this-or-that, mainly the Princess' behavior, but also about Hiccup. I waited alongside the Head Knight, Dour, as the night's proceedings began, staying in a corner as far away from the women's wandering eyes as possible. Every once in a while I'd catch a glimpse of a servant with whom I had worked earlier, and would give them a small wave. The kitchen ladies got a hoot out of this, and would send small waves my way as well. Little did they know it would probably be the last time they would ever see me.

The wait was killing me. I tapped my foot on the ground faster than the tempo of the music. The plan for that night was to go through with the ball until everyone had retired for the night. I'd already eaten plenty in preparation, but Hiccup hadn't even entered the room. I grew restless, pacing back and forth. The end of the night would not come quick enough as I feigned interest in a conversation with an earl that had an unsightly nose and large feet. Where was Hiccup?!

Sighing heavily, I leaned up against the wall. The room truly was lovely, and for all their rough-and-tumble ways, not even the terrible trio had disturbed it much. The girls wore fine silk gowns and perfumes that mingled with the scent of roses which lined the room. Through my memory, I recalled the smell of the pine salve Hiccup had made me when I'd cut myself on the rose bushes, so much sweeter than the different scents the women had doused themselves in. The past few days had been like that. It seemed as if everything triggered some sort of memory, flooding my mind with anticipation for what would occur later that night. I'd be running again, only this time, I'd have Hiccup by my side. The thought brought a small smile to my face as I grabbed another goblet of wine.

"Ahemâ€¦| May I have everyone's attention please?" A loud, booming voice called out through the ballroom. The room quieted down

immediately, facing a red-faced King Stoick. "It's time to welcome the guest of honor this evening, High Prince Horrendous Haddock III!" He called, to which the room gave light applause. From a staircase entering the ballroom, Hiccup finally appeared. He entered as soft as a breeze around the corner, his large green eyes visible all the way from where I stood. For a moment, my heart nearly stopped. He was dressed in rich and vibrant finery that graced his shoulders lightly, tucked in at his thin waist, and flowed down his slender hips. It wasn't as if Hiccup had ever looked bad or anything, he always dressed very nicely, but it was somehow different. A feeling of nostalgia washed over me once more as I remembered the first time I'd met Hiccup while he was out on his morning ride. My prince was still as radiant as ever. Pulling me from my thoughts, Hiccup stood at the top of the stairs for a moment, searching the crowd, when his eyes finally caught mine. A small smile pulled at the corners of his lips as he descended.

Beside me, I could hear gasps and whispered sounds of amazement coming from the other guests. I stayed at my place on the wall, awaiting the prince's arrival, but it seemed like each time he would manage to end a conversation with one noble, another would come up immediately after. I promised myself I would be patient, however, leaning against the wall in mild annoyance. No wonder Hiccup wasn't a fan of the other nobles, they were awful. Eventually, he escaped the crowd and found his way over to where I was standing. The dim light of the evening poured in through the tall glass windows, making his eyes glisten. "I'm sorry it took so long Jack- er- Sir Frost." He laughed nervously, "I suppose I'm still not used to calling you that." He said. I smiled, "It's nothing to worry over. I doubt I'll be considered knight-worthy after tonight anyway." I told him. He nodded, draping himself on the wall beside me.

"â€|Thank you." He said. I twisted to see his face, "For what?" I asked. He looked up at me, "For not leaving."

If I had thought no one was watching, I would have taken his hand, but I knew better than to trust the wandering eyes of a crowd. Instead I looked at him warmly, "You wouldn't have let me go even if I had." I told him. He nodded with a smile, "No, probably not." He said. The band struck up a waltz, and all around us people began moving to the center of the floor. Oh Godsâ€

"Prince Horrendous!" A girl called out a short distance away from us. Another girl walked up beside her, "Good Evening, Prince Horrendousâ€¦ Sir Frost." She said, looking up at me through her lashes. How awful. I glanced over at Hiccup, who had quickly plastered on a very "princely" smile. It wasn't his real smile, but those fairy-tale chasers wouldn't be able to tell. Still, it made me rather nervousâ€¦ but nervous wasn't quite the right word.

Ah— I supposed that wouldn't be _nervous_, but _jealous_.

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Jack looked put out of sorts by the whole situation. He'd never been to a formal ball before, of course, so that might have been his problem. Looking from the two girls back up to him, I gave a small nod. "Good evening, ladies. Is the party agreeing with you both?" He asked, simply for the sake of forced politeness. "Oh yes, it's a most

beautiful ball! Certainly fitting for the occasion!" The first girl replied.

This whole charade went on for a while until we were both forced to face the inevitable and dance with them. It wouldn't have been so bad really if that had been the only dance we'd had to put up with, but alas, after that dance more and more girls came up just as soon as the band began playing again. On and on the night continued like this until our feet were sore and we begged a rest from the girls. We skulked down in a corner, attempting to remain as unseen as possible in two chairs as we sat down.

"I'm glad that our later business isn't to be carried out by foot." I said, rubbing at one of my ankles. "Ah, that would pose quite a problem, wouldn't it?" Jack replied, leaning back into his chair to stretch out the small of his back. Later he would tell me that he almost questioned his abilities. Usually something like that wouldn't have made his feet ache to that extent. After all, he had walked much farther (and with no shoes, at that) than he had just danced. I shrugged it off, telling him it was merely making use of different muscles than he normally would.

Jack looked splendid. I could understand why the girls were after him so. Though he was not in full armor, he was still clearly distinguishable as a knight. His broad shoulders fit nicely into the uniform, which was had been made specifically for him, as he was to be seen as an attendant of Dour. It still puzzled me how he had climbed to such high esteem in the High Knight's eyes in such a short amount of time. Dour was somewhat unapproachable, and not easily impressed. Just which skill of Jack's had caught his eye, exactly? Jack had many, of course. I'd already seen his talent in archery, sword fighting, and thievery (though I doubted the last one had been seen by Dour). Quite honestly, I believed Jack capable of almost anything aside from immortality. And even then, who knew?

The sun had set a good while ago and the hall was lit by large ornate candelabras and lamps. The light flashed off of Jack's stark blue eyes every once in a while as we talked, surprising me though I knew them well. "Hiccup?" He asked, turning to face me. "Yes?" I replied, looking back up at him. He twisted in his chair a bit as he prepared to stand. "If you could, would you dance with me?" He asked.

I blinked in surprise as I felt my cheeks flush at the unexpected question. "A-ahâ€¦ I suppose I would, yes?" I answered shakily. Jack's eyes crinkled at the corners with a smile. "Good. Now, what if I told you we actually could?" He said, a mischievous look painting his features. I lowered my eyes, "What are you going on about now?" I asked him. "Oh, just answer the question!" He pressed, a childlike giddiness to the words. I sighed, "Very well... If there was a way, then yes, I would." I said.

At this point Jack stood up (getting to his point, I supposed), before he leaned down to me, "Then would you please allow me the honor of dancing with your highness?" He asked, bowing slightly as he looked down upon me. I shook my head, "Like I said, yes. But anyway, what are you getting at? There's no-"

"Ah, but there is." Jack interrupted, pointing over to an area behind us where a corner had been draped in a tapestry. "Come along, your highness, it will be fun." He said, pulling lightly at my sleeve. I

looked up at him in disbelief for a few moments before breaking out into a laugh. "Youâ€¦ you are something different, Jack Frost." I told him, standing up. Jack smirked, "I'll take that as a compliment." He said. I rolled my eyes, "You make _take it_ however you like." I told him as we began our way over towards the tapestry.

Making doubly sure no eyes were cast upon us, we slipped through the side of the tapestry and into the space behind it. It was actually quite roomy despite its looks, and I was surprised never to have found such a place before. Then again, Jack had a particular eye for those kinds of things. We had made it just in time for the next song to begin. It was an upbeat waltz, with a light, happy sound. Jack's eyes lit up. "Ah! I've danced to this before." He said. I raised an eyebrow, "Oh, really?" I asked. Jack grinned as he took my hand and placed it on his shoulder. Looked as if I was I the girl's position, then. "Yes, though it was played more like a folk song than a waltz at the time." He told me.

"Haha, did you dance to it _well _is the real question." I said, smirking up at him. Jack only let out a small click of his tongue, "Of course I did! Have you ever seen me? I'm the best dancer North of Yerk." He said, beginning to sway in time to the music. "I'm sure..." I said, following his lead. He was very good, actually. We slid across our small expanse of open floor in uniform steps. The dim light which seeped in from underneath the tapestry's edge bent with the coming and going of the guests as we listened to the merrymaking on the other side.

"So have you said anything of a goodbye to Aster yet?" He asked, surprising me. I looked at the dark blank wall beside us. "Noâ€¦ I had assumed it wouldn't be safe to breathe a word to anyone." I told him. Jack continued swaying back and forth with me before giving me a small smile. "That old rabbit would never say anything, he's too stubbornâ€¦ and I'm sure he already knows anyway." Jack said. I looked back up at him, "What do you mean by that?" I asked.

"I mean he's no hypocrite." Jack said. I was only more confused by his answer, but decided to leave it be. If Jack could trust in Aster, so could I. In truth, it was a huge weight off my chest to know I wouldn't be leaving without any word of goodbye.

The song came to an end, as did our mischief. We decided it would be better to sneak out from behind the tapestry early rather than to be caught together behind it. Such a thing wouldn't bode well for our travels that night. We rejoined the party as if nothing had ever happened and enjoyed the food and drink while we still could. All too soon a life of riches would be replaced with one of ragsâ€¦ but I was not sad in the least.

More girls kept on asking me what I thought of Princess Merida. I couldn't rightly say. "Well, she certainly thinks for herself, yes? We have quite a bit in common actually." I told them, thinking, "_Well, neither of us wish to be married to a stranger, anyways." _

The night continued on much like any other ball I'd ever attended, yet unlike any one before it in the same breath. Something in the air seemed to spark. It was like a small itch in the back of my throat, but I chose to ignore it. I danced a while longer, ate some more, and

watched as the ball continued on until I got a spare moment and Jack joined me once again. "If you don't want our cover broken you should look less tense." His voice rumbled beside me. I shook my head back and forth a few times, trying to clear it. "Sorry, Jack. It's just this nagging feelingâ€¦" I told him, exhaling shakily. Jack tilted his head to the side with a gentle smile. "'It's alright to be nervous, you know." He said, ruffling the hair on the back of my neck nonchalantly. I smiled up at him, "It's not that I'm nervous, reallyâ€¦ It's more like-

"Ahhhhh!" "Oh my!" "King Stoick?!"

To my left a string of gasps and shrieks struck up from the crowd. "Fatherâ€¦?"

I pushed my way through the hordes of people coming in to see what the commotion was. As I neared, I noticed that men were barking out orders from inside the center of the swarm. "Everyone stay clear!" "Here, lift his armâ€¦" "Don't! Here, this first." "Your Highness? Can you hear me your Highness? King Stoick?"

Finally I pushed through the last wall of people to see what the commotion was all about. There on the floor laid my father, splayed out on the ground in a deep stupor. A trickle of blood slid down his chin, dripping down onto his ermine collar. "Father?!" I yelled, immediately dropping down beside him. "Prince Horrendous, keep back!" Dour commanded as he led a few men to carry my father's large form from the room. I followed close behind them in a frenzy, my mind alight with questions until a grip on my wrist paused my pursuit. Jack spun me around, effectively stopping me in my tracks.

"Let me go, Jack! This- He's-!"

"Listen, Hiccup! Calm down. There's nothing you can do. If you follow them, you'll only crowd the room." Jack said, gripping both of my hands firmly at my side. I caught my breath after a few moments, and not caring much who saw me, I leaned my forehead against Jack's chest. He led me out of the public view down a long hall and into a room I hadn't seen before. "Where?" I choked out. Jack pulled me to the side of a bed where he sat me down. "This is my room." Jack said. Despite the dire situation, my heart gave a leap at that.

Jack wrapped an arm around my shoulder. "Just take a deep breath. Everyone will be watching you later, so gather yourself for their sake." Jack said, rubbing my shoulder a little bit. I let go of a huge sigh, allowing my shoulders to droop a little. "I knew something was going to happen. I should have-" "Shhh." Jack said, moving both hands to massage soothing circles around the base of my neck and shoulders. We sat in silence for a while as his hands relaxed the tension away. Eventually I let my mind go numb, refusing to let anything in. Focusing only on breathing, I let myself sink into Jack's side.

After a while Jack ruffled my hair, "If you're alright now, they'll be wondering where you got to." He told me, leaning down to kiss my forehead. I nodded against his ribcage, breathing in his scent before sitting up straight again. Jack stood up and offered his hand to me. I took it and we left the room. At the first sight of me, two other knights told me my presence was requested in the King's quarters. I rushed into the room, leaving Jack behind with the other guests.

I walked up to the side of the long bed with an odd sense of déjà vu. "Father?" I asked, noticing his eyes were still halfway open. He made a choking mumble, and with his hand, beckoned me weakly over. I came to his side and gripped the hand which had called me forth.

"Horrendous!" Father started, my name coming out garbled through his scratchy voice. "Yes?" I asked, leaning on the edge of the bed so he wouldn't have to speak very loud.

"Horrendous, I must apologize." He said. I shook my head, "Don't speak, please. All is forgiven, I swear so rest your-" "Horrendous, listen to me. Your mother I meant none of those things I really lo- Arrrrccahhh!" Father fell into another coughing fit as more blood spattered up onto the comforter. Attendants swarmed as he ran himself out of air by coughing and fell back onto the bed in a writhing mess. Somewhere through the commotion I was pushed away from the fray in a confused and frantic state. "Let him speak!" I demanded, still trying to look at where my father lay through the throng of servants.

Then all was still.

I was then only vaguely aware of the ballet of assistants that twirled about the room to try clean up my father. My feet moved numbly out of the room, my stomach heavy behind me. As soon as I left the room, I was surrounded on all sides by anxious royals. "What's happened?" "Prince Horrendous? Are you alright?" "Which misfortune has befallen the King?" "Say, are you feeling unwell?"

"Enough! You repulsive creatures! Leave. Me. Be!" I shouted, much to the astonishment of everyone in the room.

I pushed my way through the crowd without so much as an "excuse me". Tears stung the back of my eyes as I all but ran to my room. Slamming the large oaken door behind me, I collapsed on the footboard of my bed. I stood up, leaning against the board and all I felt I could do was scream, but no sound would come out. I heard the door behind me open.

"Leave!" I commanded, not turning to face the intruder, "I beg of you please go!" I pleaded, my voice shaking. I heard footsteps creeping towards me and I flipped around to meet them face-on, "Didn't you hear m-! J-Jack?" I asked, unprepared to see him in front of me. "Horrendous," He began, bringing his arms up as if to embrace me. "No!" I said, slapping his hands away as I turned back towards the bed. "I'm fine so would you please just go!"

Arms wrapped around my shoulders as my last strand of control wore thin. "Please go!" I begged, my voice small. He replied with a gentle squeeze. "It's alright. You don't have to pretend for me."

And with that, a tear rolled freely down my cheek. Silent sobs shook my shoulders as I gripped tightly at the board. Jack's hold around my shoulders loosened, and he brought a hand forward to turn my face towards his. I tried to hold any further tears from coming by squeezing my eyes shut, but it only ended up forcing a few more out. Feather-light kisses trailed their way down the wet paths of my

cheeks as they traveled to my lips. My eyes opened slightly, gazing at Jack's long eyelashes in front of me. My eyes slid shut once more as my grip moved from the footboard to the collar of Jack's tunic.

"He didn't hate herâ€| he didn'tâ€|"

-.---.---.---.---.---.--

I held Hiccup until he could breathe properly again. He had been strong for much too long, that much was obvious. He looked like a snapped string. I pulled away from his lips and led him to the side of the bed where we sat down. I rubbed soothing circles into his shoulders while he tried to calm down a little, the muscles there pulled tight as a bow. His eyes were far away, his mind someplace distant beyond the castle walls. It gave me some time to think myself. Our plans had been thoroughly foiled. If Hiccup left, there would no longer be an heir. He was the last of the royal family, the only one who could possibly take the throne. If Hiccup was gone, the country would be left wide open to invasion. Hell, with the death of King Stoick it was already on unstable ground.

My thoughts were ended by the low droning of mourning church bells. The sound echoed off the stone walls like the crying of ghosts, drawing Hiccup's attention back to the waking world. "Jackâ€| I'm not ready to be a kingâ€|" He said, pressing his folded hands up to his lips in thought. I rubbed the ever-present tension from his shoulders as I thought of what to say.

"Hiccupâ€| I've travelled to more than twenty countries during my life and never, not once, have I seen a kingdom as beautiful, peaceful, or as prosperous as Berk. And I think there's a reason for that. All my life I grew up believing that monarchs, nobles, and all of your kind were simply corrupt, money hungry dogs. To be truthful, in the beginning I believed you would be like that as wellâ€| but you weren't. Your smile was warm, and you had thoughts that were all your own, and a large heart for your servants, and a dislike of sword fighting, and you were everything I thought a monarch wasn't."

I turned on the bed to face him, taking hold of his hands, "Believe it or not, your father is â€|wasâ€| the exact same way, though I'm not so sure you ever noticed. While I had my training under Dour, your father was always coming in and out, speaking with people and checking up on things. I noticed things about him that were very much like you. Like the way you treat everyone you see with a high regard, how you don't give up until you've thought of every possible solutionâ€| you're very much like him, I think. So, if he could do it, I know for a fact that you can as well, possibly even better." I said, stroking his hair.

Hiccup thought about that for a moment before sighing, "You say all these things, Jack, but the truth isâ€| he's not even my real father." He said, a wrinkle forming on his brow. I shook my head, "That doesn't matter. Just because you were born of the blood of another does not change the fact that you were raised by King Stoick. It doesn't change your morals, your thoughts, or the way you act, it merely affects what you look likeâ€| and for that, you had your mother." I told him.

Hiccup stayed silent for a while after this, once again slipping into

a daze as he took in everything in. You could hardly blame him after all, the man's father had just died right in front of his eyes and Hiccup was suddenly expected to take over a kingdom he had only just barely begun to think about inheriting while he was supposed to be running away with his forbidden lover the night before his wedding.

Ohâ€| the wedding.

Iâ€|

â€|Maybe I really should have left earlier.

"Thank you, Jack."

I held his hand tighter in mine. No, leaving wouldn't solve anything. I doubted if I even could leave him at that point. It just wouldn't be possible, I'd come right back. I placed a kiss into the palm of his hand, "They'll be wondering where we are, and you must wear a brave face for everyone else. After allâ€| you're the King now." I said, the fact still sinking into my own brain. Hiccup took a deep breath to steel himself against what would surely seem like a tidal wave of nobles. Once we decided he looked presentable, we stood up and made for the door.

Surely enough, when we entered the main corridor the nobles flooded Hiccup with even more questions, which he merely gave vague answers to or avoided entirely. He made his way swiftly across the hall, looking for Head Knight Dour. Once he had been found, we all retreated to a small side room where Dour began to explain how everything from that point on would work. Hiccup seemed as if he would collapse at any given moment, so I pulled out some chairs for us to sit on. We had begun discussing Hiccup's coronation when there came a strong knock on the door.

King Fergus, without waiting for our response, appeared from behind the door with Queen Elinor at his side. "Pardon my interruption. However, I would like to speak with you about the wedding." King Fergus said. My stomach flipped. What was that? Even though Hiccup had already lost his father, the king of Kerk was still going to force Hiccup to marry the day after? My eyes glowed with anger as I forced myself to look away. Hiccup looked surprised, as if he had completely forgotten about it. "Ohâ€| I see. Take a seat please, King Fergus, Queen Elinor." He said, and they did.

"The queen and I were discussing this earlier, but we believe it would be in good taste to postpone the wedding. At least until a few days after the funeral. It would not be good to have such an event looming over the occasion." King Fergus said. Hiccup nodded his head quietly, looking out the window. His eyes held the same concentration as when he had proposed that we should elope. "Ahâ€| yes." He said, his brow twisted.

His expression did not go unnoticed by King Fergus. "I suppose I shall take my leave, then. These things can be discussed at a later time. I'll go announce the postponement to the other guests before retiring for the evening. And please, do try to get some rest as well, Prince Horrendous." King Fergus said, bowing his head slightly in goodbye.

"Wait a moment, please."

Hiccup had come out of his trance, and was suddenly out of his chair. What was he up to? I glanced at him in question, but he ignored me with a small wave of his hand. King Fergus turned back to face him, "Yes?" He asked as Queen Elinor turned her head in intrigue. "Iâ€| would like to propose something a little different before that." Hiccup said, gripping the back of his chair. Queen Elinor replied, "Go on."

Hiccup gave me a glance so fleetingly I was just barely sure I had even seen it. He cleared his throat, "Yes. Well, thenâ€|" He said, taking a breath before continuing,

"I would like to call off the wedding."

-.-.-.- end of chapter-.-.-.-

Hey hey hey.

_Just one more chapter left! I can say I will be really sad to end this one. There were so many scenes I wanted to write but didn't because they didn't fit or whatever. Anyway, as I've been saying, keep on the lookout for the new story HoneyBeeez and I will be putting out before too long. _

Also, I've already started on a short little Jack x Hiccup x Hiro fic that's turning out super fun.

AND ALSO, DON'T FORGET TO SIGN UP FOR THE DRAWING! (Details can be found on the update before this chapter)

13. Chapter 12

****Smut warning! Don't like, don't read.****

Chapter 12

"What?!"

King Fergus' bellowing voice echoed throughout the room, "Call it off? Have you gone mad?!" He asked, his anger twisting his brow. Queen Elinor looked up worriedly at her husband. "Please, King Fergus, I promise I intended no harm or offense by my words. If you'll just allow me to explain-"

"Explain! Youâ€| What is it? My daughter not good enough for you, boy?!"

"No! No, that's absolutely not it. Merida is a wonderfully charming young woman, it's simply that I-"

"That you what? That you don't care for her face? I know she behaves rather crudely sometimes but she is a princess. A princess your parents chose, nonetheless!"

"Please, I realize that. I truly do. However, that's not the point I'm trying to-"

"Ha! Make excuses all you want, we'll see if you're really-"

"SILENCE! Both of you!" Queen Elinor interrupted.

King Fergus quietened down immediately. Queen Elinor cleared her throat, "Now Prince Horrendous, I do believe I understand what your reasoning isâ€¦ You do not feel ready to take on an entire kingdom, much less a young bride like Merida, am I correct?" She asked. Hiccup let out a breath he had been holding. "Yes, that's right. The fault does not lie with your daughter, I swear it. I'm afraid I would unintentionally neglect her, and I don't wish for that to happen. The last thing I want is for her to be hurt. After all, she doesn't like me very much to begin with. Actually marrying her would only make her distaste for me grow, and apart from thatâ€¦ my heart already belongs to another."

My eyes sprung wide. Hiccup refused to look my direction again, but I knew he could feel my gaze as his cheeks began to heat up. Queen Elinor chuckled. "Very well, then. The King and I will discuss this amongst ourselves. However, I do hope you'll reconsider, Prince Haddock," She said. King Fergus opened his mouth to say something else, but the queen shot him a warning glance that shut it immediately. They left the room after that, with Dour on their heels to go and prepare for what would have to be done the next day. And thus, we were left in the room alone together.

I could hear Hiccup's shaky breathing though he tried to keep it light. Standing up, I heard his breath hitch as I closed the distance between us. "I can't believe you just did that," I said. Hiccup frowned and looked down at the floor, "I know, already. It was a risky move butâ€¦ but I just didn't want to let you goâ€¦ and since you're the reason I don't want to get married in the first place, I thought that it would- Mmph!"

I stopped his explanation short by bringing my lips down upon his, cradling his face in my hands. He panicked for a moment, gasping lightly, but then his hands found their way to my collar as I deepened the kiss. When we broke away, our breaths were ragged and our faces ruddy. I held him in an embrace and whispered in his ear, "Do you have any idea how happy I am?" I asked him. Hiccup's voice cracked as he spoke, "I- I think I can guessâ€¦"

I planted a small kiss right below his earlobe. "Go finish your business with Dourâ€¦ and when you're done, come meet me in my room," I said, my lips brushing his skin as I traced down his spine with my fingers. A surprised breath left his lips, a bright blush painting his cheeks. I gave him another heavy, needy kiss before pulling away from him and walking towards the door.

-.-.-.-.-

When Jack had shut the door, I had fallen straight to my knees. _What was that?_ My insides tingled and my breaths fell too hot on my lips. "Nnnnâ€¦" I stood up, quickly noticing the state I was already in. "â€¦_Gods damn that thief_, " I said to myself, using the table for support. I straightened my robes, hoping to the Gods that they would keep _it_ hidden.

When I emerged from the room, Jack was nowhere in sight. I took a

deep breath, trying to cool down. Where had Dour gone?

As if right on cue, the girls appeared. "Prince Horrendous!" "High Knight Dour is looking for you." "Ohâ€|" "Ah, are you feeling alright, Sire?" "Your face is flushed, are you feeling feverish?" "Should we bring you something?" They prattled on, making my face grow ever redder. I pinched the bridge of my nose between my fingers. "No. No, I'm quite fine, thank you. You said Sir Dour was looking for me? Where has he gone?" I asked, trying to steer them away from my troublesome complexion.

Juiliara nodded her head to the right down a corridor, "He's in the map roomâ€| Are you sure there's nothing the matter, my Prince?" She asked. I swallowed, "No, no of course not. Well, I should be off to see Sir Dour, then. Thank you, girls," I said, turning on my heel before they could protest. Dear Gods, why did walking have to be so difficult?! Somehow, I managed to make my way to the map room without accident. Yet when I entered the room, I was short of breath, and had to lean on the table. I hoped the head knight wouldn't notice. "Ah, Prince Horrendous. I know I said I'd take my leave of you, but we really should discuss the date of the coronation before the morrow. Like I was saying earlier, thisâ€| Prince Horrendous? Are you quite alright?"

I let out a very unconvincing laugh, "Ah-haâ€| of course! Fit as a fiddle, I am. So, about the coronation-nnnnâ€|" My head drooped down as I took a few more quick breaths. Jack's words were still echoing on my skin, my body recounting them endlessly. I needed to hurry. I cleared my throat and stood up straight once more, "Coronation! What do you suggest?" I asked. Dour assessed me with a raised eyebrow, "Well, I'd say it should be before the weddingâ€| if there is even to be a wedding," he said, shooting me a disappointed look. Quite frankly, at that moment I couldn't have cared less if he'd had stared at me with a jester's grin, I simply wanted out of that room, and into another.

"Yes, good! Though I do hope to cancel it. So, now that we've got that covered, I think I shall retire-"

"Prince Horrendous! What has come over you? Are you ill?"

I groaned in annoyance. "No, Dour. Let it suffice to say I've had a rather long night!" I told him, turning and exiting the room while Sir Dour tried to call me back. I did not care. Not one little bit.

I rushed down the hall, remembering the path to Jack's room in my mind. I took a different route, one that would be less likely to have nobles and assistants running about and getting anxious. I took deep breaths, trying to calm myself. I finally reached Jack's door and gave it a knock. Instantly the door flung open and I was pulled inside. Jack's lips crashed into mine with a greediness I hadn't thought possible. "Mmmâ€|Nn. J- Jackâ€|"

His lips kissed over my entire face. "_You took too long, Hiccup,_" He growled in my ear. I felt the words travel through me like fire. I brought my hands to the sides of his face, "I'm sorryâ€| so hurryâ€|"

Another growl escaped his lips as his hands found their way around my

waist, feeling their way lower until I felt as if his hands had travelled over every inch of me. My body remembered each touch, leaving an aching burn behind. As he pulled my tunic off, we fumbled to the bed. I fell upon the soft mattress, throwing the tunic aside before gripping Jack's collar to bring his lips down to mine once more. His hands gripped my hair, tugging as he raised my chin higher. I moaned as his lips travelled lower down my neck and chest. His tongue traced patterns all over my heated skin. He nipped at my navel, teasing me there. "Jack, don'tâ€¦" I said, pulling back on his hair. He looked up at me with a smirk, "Why? You're feeling good, aren't you, Your Highness?"

My head rolled back into the duvet. "Don't be so cruelâ€¦" I whimpered. Jack didn't listen. He pushed my legs apart and my eyes closed tight. There was a shifting on the bed as his voice came from above me. "You'd best keep your eyes open for this part, Horrendous." His voice called. I opened an eye cautiously to see Jack pulling his tunic over his head, revealing the finely sculpted man beneath. He leaned down to put his hands on either side of my face. "Help me with the lower part?" He asked against my lips. His breaths mixed with mine as I let my hands explore him. I started from his shoulders, bringing them around his chest to his chiseled torso. I slipped my fingers underneath the waistband of his trousers, hooking them into the sturdy fabric there. Jack hummed in pleasure as I slipped them lower on his hips. "All the way, love, or you won't get anyâ€¦" He whispered, looking me straight in the eye. I bit my lip, moving my hands lower until I was forced to sit up.

With a little courage, I managed to slip my hands out of his trousers and push him backwards onto the bed. Jack looked surprised at first, but then sent me a sly smile. My hands felt their way back up his torso as I kissed him again. I brought one hand lower, pulling his waistband down further. Then I trailed soft kisses down his chest, to his hips, where I bit at the waistband there. I looked back up at him to find a gaze that could only be described as ravenous. I swallowed a little, trembling as I pulled his trousers the rest of the way off.

As I sat back up, Jack beckoned me over with a wave of his finger. I crawled back towards him, my hands on the side of his torso. "_Good job._" He said, his own hand slipping past the waistband of my own trousers. "_Mmm_â€¦" I whined, letting my head rest on his chest. His free hand trailed lightly up and down my side, tickling me there. The suddenly the tender hands were gone, and I was flipped onto my back once more. Jack leaned above me, one of his hands pinning both of my wrists above my head. The other hand teased lower, tracing over my collar bones and hip bones. Jack planted light kisses over my chest, "Your skin is so lovely," he breathed against it, "Tell me it will be only mine," he said, his free hand reaching up to caress my face. I pulled my head up close enough to kiss him on the cheek. "Only yours, I promise youâ€¦"

Jack smiled down at me, "These have been on for much too long," he said, all but ripping my trousers off. With both of us completely bare, I pulled my arms up around his neck, "You're right."

Jack leaned forward, rubbing his arousal into my own. "_Aah!_ -Nnnâ€¦" I moaned, my grip around his neck pulling him in tighter. Jack blew in my ear, causing a sweet shiver to course down my spine. As he continued to grind his hips into mine, it was all I could do to

keep my voice down. With my hand, I tried to cover up the source of the embarrassing sounds leaving my lips, but Jack wouldn't have it. "I want to hear you," he said. "B- but what- Mm! -what if someone else can hear us?" I asked. Jack kissed the back of my hand, "Doesn't matter. Let them. They'll know better than to disturb us." He said, giving me a mocking grin before grinding into me once more. "Haa! Mm!" Ja- ahk?!"

Jack slid two fingers into my mouth, playing with my tongue. "If you can make me feel good from here, I'll give you what you want," Jack said. My eyes widened as the digits moved around inside my mouth. "Nnn!"

Giving in, I sucked diligently on his fingers, swirling my tongue around them, licking, and sometimes taking them deeper. All the while, Jack watched me. I felt my cheeks heat up even further under his gaze and tried to look away. Then the fingers were gone. "Open your mouth and stick out your tongue," Jack commanded. I instantly complied, and Jack's mouth met mine again. "Nn! Mmm?"

The unfamiliar feeling of something probing at my entrance shocked me. "Shh!" Jack said, "If I don't get you ready first, it's going to hurt," he told me. I squirmed as one of the fingers entered me, swirling around inside. I pulled myself tighter to him, unsure of how to deal with the new feeling. It was odd, yet not painful, but still-

"A-aaahH!" I cried out, tears forming in the corners of my eyes as I looked up at Jack, "W-what was? It's strange!" Jack looked down at me with a smile, "It's not 'strange'. It feels good, doesn't it?" he asked, and with those words, he flicked his fingers back up into the same spot as before, causing me to bend on the sheets in the delicious sensation. Wait! when had it become _fingers_? There had only been one! "I think you're ready now," Jack said. I looked up at him through my pleasure-filled confusion, "What do you mean?" I asked, disappointed by the disappearance of his fingers. Suddenly I felt _him_ there. My eyes went wide, "There's no way! It's too-" Jack brought a finger to my lips, "Trust me, Hiccup. Now breathe," he said. I took a large breath in, and before I could exhale, he was inside. "Ahhn! Mmph!" I screamed, unable to hold my voice back any longer.

Jack met my forehead with a kiss, "Nnn! Haa! you feel so good inside, Hic." He told me. I tried to keep my breath from running away with me, bringing my hands around Jack's back. "Mmm!"

Without warning, Jack pulled out a little ways before pushing back into me, slowly. I gasped, the pads of my fingers digging into his back. "Hnn! Don't squeeze around me so tight! relax," he said, running a hand through my hair. I took deep breaths, and they'd hitch every once in a while as he let me get used to him.

"Horrendous! are you alright?" He asked, looking into my eyes. I nodded, "I'm fine!" Jack leaned back, bringing one of my knees up to rest on his shoulder. He kissed me there, using his other hand to grab my hip. "Is it fine to move?" He asked. I squeezed the blankets in my hands. Taking one more deep breath I answered him, "Yes!"

Jack gave me another small kiss on my knee before pulling out again.

I braced myself as he thrust back inside, but I wasn't prepared for the extreme wave of pleasure that washed over me. "Hnnn!" I groaned, tightening my hold on the blankets. This time, there were no breaks in between, only continuous motion, and each time he hit that spot, my vision went blurry and I couldn't think straight. Jack's hold on my waist hardened as his movements became faster. I rolled my hips up to meet his as my hands dug deeper into the mattress. I clawed at the soft linen, my whole body tensing. "Ahhâ€¦ Hiccupâ€¦" Jack groaned, his movements becoming more eager. My toes curled as I felt myself coming closer to the edge of ecstasy. "J- Jack! Mm!" I could tell he was getting close too as moans poured forth from both of our mouths.

"Hic- Ahhâ€¦ I can'tâ€¦" He said, biting lightly at my knee. "Nmm! Me neitherâ€¦" I told him, reaching up to pull his neck down once more. My member rubbed teasingly against his stomach, the added stimulation making my mind go numb. "Jackâ€¦ _please_â€¦" I begged. Jack growled into my ear, "_Come for me, Horrendous_."

I climaxed hard as his member pressed deep into me, Jack releasing himself only a few seconds later. As we rode them out, Jack's hand found its way into mine. He removed himself and I felt a warm substance slip out with him. Jack collapsed on top of me, catching his breath. I moved the hand that wasn't clasped in his to run through his soft white hair. "Hic, that wasâ€¦" he said, trying to think of a word for it.

I chuckled, "It _was_, wasn't it?"

Jack planted a few gentle kisses along my jawline, "It was indeed," he said, before his lips finally found mine once more. This kiss was softer, sweeter than the ones before it. Jack laid his head down on my chest as I played with his fingers at our side. "Oh, and Hiccup?"

"Hmm?"

"Happy Birthday."

-.-.-.-.-

Compared to the bliss of the night before, the dawn was like hell. I had meant to wake up in the arms of my lover after a nice long rest to find him smiling up at me gently, then we'd talk for a little while before we'd sneak him out of my roomâ€¦ or something like that.

But no.

I woke up to the squeals of four frantic handmaids as they all came scrambling into my room. "Sir Frost!" "Oh, you need to get up!" "It's Prince Hiccup, he can't be found anywhere!" "Perhaps he's run away?!" "He never returned to his room last nightâ€¦"

I sprang up in bed and, out of pure drowsy habit, so did Hiccup.

"â€¦Prince Horrendous?!" Juiliara asked, her eyes wide with surprise. Then I remembered that we were both rather scantily clothed. Hiccup seemed to choke on air for a moment, unable to deal with the

situation at hand. "A-ahâ€¦ girls. Good morningâ€¦" he said, raking his mind for some kind of excuse, even though it was quite obvious what we had been up to. I could tell by the girls' small smiles and light blushes that they wouldn't believe anything Hiccup said anyway. Time for a different approach.

"Good morning, m'ladies," I said, sliding off the bed as I wrapped the sheet around my bare lower half. Holding the material in one hand, I crossed over to the other side of the room. They all looked at each other with excited glances. I placed a hand on Elizabell's shoulder, "Now girls. I know what this appears to be, and truth be told, you're right. But you see, It'd be a great inconvenience to his highness if you were to say anything to anyone. All of you wish for his happiness, yes?" I asked, to which they nodded profusely. I smiled my very best lady-killer smile, "Ah, I knew I could rely on all of you. His most loyal, trustworthy, marvelous maids would never betray him. You're all just as precious as the finest gold. You'll keep it a secret then, won't you? Just between us?" I asked, placing a finger on my lips.

The girls practically melted. They all nodded once more, all of them promising that they wouldn't, never ever. I gave them each a gentle smile, "Thank you, I can see why Horrendous speaks of you all so fondly. So, if you don't mind, we'll be needing to get dressed. Ah! That means a change of clothes will be in order for Prince Horrendousâ€¦ and make sure no one sees you," I told them. Their blushes deepened just a shade, "Oh! Of course," "Yes, yes!" "Please excuse us, then, Sir Frost, Your Highnessâ€¦" they said as they curtsied and exited the room, giggling once the door had been shut.

I turned around to face Hiccup, who looked as if he'd just had a heart attack. "T-t-they k-knowâ€¦" he muttered, his eyes still frozen open in fright. I quickly crossed over to the bedside, pulling him into my lap. "It's fine, I promise you. They won't tell anyone," I said, gently stroking his hair. "Are you sure? What if they do? What if you're banished? Or worse, sentenced to death?!" he asked, clutching me closer to him. I shushed him, "Hiccup you're forgetting something," I told him. He looked back up at me, still panicked. "You're the King. They can't behead me, nor can they banish me if it is against your will." I reminded him. He calmed down a bit after that, beginning to breathe again. "You're rightâ€¦"

The girls came back a few minutes later with a change of clothes they'd smuggled through the hallways successfully without being seen. Hiccup had dressed in some of my underclothes so he wouldn't be found completely bare in front of them again.

When they left, we dressed, and Hiccup decided it was best for him to take his leave before others came looking for either of us. So much for my blissful morning-after. I chuckled, walking to the window to greet the morning air. It was a nice morning, good for a ride. Had we ended up eloping the night before, we'd have picked a good time to do it.

I exited my room, walking down the corridor to the dining hall. It was rather empty, considering the large number of nobles that would spend that morning in "mourning" for their dead king. I was surprised to see Hiccup already there, standing near the edge of a tapestry as he heatedly conversed with Dour. I walked up to them, pretending not

to notice how a slight blush had crawled up Hiccup's cheeks upon my arrival.

"I still think it's a very risky move to make, Your Highness. If the King and Queen take offense at your rejection, we could possibly lose one of our strongest allies, or even worse, end up going to war with them! Honestlyâ€¦ I believed you to have more good sense than this," Dour vented, his cheeks angrily puffed out. Hiccup's lips pressed into a tight line, "I have the good sense to tell them the truth and to save a girl from infinite unhappiness at my side. Is that really such a bad thing to do?!" He asked, to which Dour replied, "When it comes to the sake of the kingdom, yes, it is!"

I interrupted their argument, suggesting that things would perhaps seem better after a hot meal. They both grudgingly obliged and moved to the table, not a word further said between them. Dour and I sat in our usual seats, yet Hiccup stood a while a small length away from the table. He looked troubled. I was about to say something when he shook his head. He crossed to the end of the long table, to his father's chair. The movement didn't go unnoticed by Dour, yet the head knight didn't say anything. I gave him a questioning glance. Dour leaned over and whispered, "His father did the exact same thing."

Hiccup lightly touched the chair, still debating whether or not it would be alright. The light chatter from the nobles around us had gone still. Hiccup seemed overly aware of that fact. Finally, I could stand it no longer. "You'll starve if you don't sit down, Your Highness," I said, my voice gentle. He looked at me, trying to read my face. Finally, he took a small breath, pulled out the chair, and sat down.

After breakfast, we all retreated into the room of maps, where Hiccup and Dour began discussing how they would go about dealing with the multiple wars going on at the time. We were interrupted by a knock on the door. Princess Merida entered the room first, followed by her mother and father. Merida looked fidgety and impatient, something I couldn't interpret as a good or a bad sign. "Well go on! I want to know if you've decided to make me marry Prince Fish-Bones over there or not," Merida said, throwing an angry hand in Hiccup's direction. To my surprise, Hiccup merely laughed under his breath.

Queen Elinor sent Merida a look of warning as King Fergus stepped forward to deliver our fate.

"Well, after much discussion last night, we still believe that it is in the best interest of both of our kingdoms that you marry."

Hiccup's face dropped as he sent me a frantic glance. Princess Merida threw something. "What?! What do you mean 'it's in the best interest'?! It's obviously more favorable to Berk for us to stay unwed if their King says so himself! Besides, it was a deal you made with the previous King and Queen, who are already dead! It no longer concerns-"

"Hush!" King Fergus commanded. "Allow me to finish!" he continued, clearing his throat.

"Yes, it would be best if the marriage were to take placeâ€¦ but

something you said last night had us considering if it was worth itâ€| worth the unhappiness of our daughterâ€| and we could not allow that to happen." Here he paused, taking the hand of his queen.

"Therefore tonight, let there be an announcement that the wedding is to be called off."

Princess Merida's jaw dropped along with the rest of ours, "Really?!" she squealed, her eyes bright and sparkling. I looked over at Hiccup, who gave me huge grin. I sent him one back, winking while Dour wasn't looking. The King and Queen said a few more words, but I was no longer listening. As soon as they had said their pardons and exited the room, Hiccup faced Dour.

"I think you know that I won't be able to pay attention properly for a while after that. I need to spend some energyâ€| Sir Frost? Might you accompany me for a short ride?" Hiccup asked, eliciting an exasperated groan from the head knight. I smiled down at him, "Of course, my Prince. I said, motioning towards the door. Once we had escaped Dour's heavy gaze, we hurried along the servant passages towards the door nearest the stables. Riding atop Toothless and Stormfly, we headed deep into the woods bordering the castle. When we were sure we wouldn't be seen, we jumped down from our horses.

Hiccup leaped into my arms, "I'm not getting married! I'm. Not. Getting. Married! I don't have to get married!" He shrieked, grinning from ear to ear. I kissed the tip of his nose. "I know. Dear Gods I knowâ€|"I said, placing my forehead atop his as I spun him around. Hiccup reached up to hold my face in his hands. "Only yours." He said. I wrapped my arms around his waist,

"All mine."

-.-.*-.*TS.*-.*-.*-.*

The next few days passed rather quickly. Between the never-ending planning and the funeral, I didn't get to see Hiccup much during the day, but each night I'd sneak up to his balcony. Despite the dark shadow of the king's death, the days seemed to pass happily.

And so I found myself in a church. A place I'd only ever used for the advantage of sanctuary beforehand. I watched as Hiccup traversed the center aisle in his best finery, furs, and gold. He held his head high as he approached the priest. He was different from the boy I'd met that autumn day on horseback. I noticed how his face was no longer a faÃ§ade, but a clear shield, revealing the emotions and strength underneath it. As the priest began speaking in hymns and words I'd never understood, Hiccup calmly repeated after him, his voice falling like velvet settling over the congregation. After a particularly long speech from the priest, Hiccup turned around, holding the scepter in his hand as he repeated the words. Another phrase came from the priest, ending in "King Horrendous Haddock III!" The room took one collective breath before chanting all together,

"Long live King Horrendous!"

-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-.-

I chuckled, remembering Jack's face at my coronation after he'd forgotten to say "long live" with the others.

"What are you smiling about over there?" Jack asked, raising an eyebrow. I lifted a hand to play with a lock of his hair, "Oh, nothing. Just remembering days past," I told him. Jack's brow furrowed, "Don't tell me you're laughing about the bloody chicken again," he said.

I laughed, but shook my head. "Noâ€¦ I was thinking about that ridiculous face you pulled at my coronation, actually," I told him. Jack groaned, "Ugh. I thought we had agreed to never speak of it again!" he said. I patted his shoulder, "Alright, alrightâ€¦"

The garden swing creaked as the spring sunshine poured down in reds and yellows across the horizon. The rosebuds gave off the familiar scent of a youth filled with fond memories. After becoming King, I'd put my sweet-talking tongue to good use on the warfront. I'd talked the kingdom out of most of the existing wars, and with Dour's help and expertise, we had won all of the others and the kingdom had grown exponentially. Berk had entered a time of peace and prosperity for all, and the castle reflected that. I had let most of the assistants take their freedom if they wished for it, though very few did. Some of them would be put in charge of the newest addition to the castle. Even Dour had retired to go live out his days richly in the countryside. He deserved it.

"Horrendousâ€¦ do you know what word came to my mind the very first time I saw you?" He asked me. I tilted my head, "Noâ€¦ what was it?" I answered. "Radiant," he replied. I shook my head, "Really, now, you're too silly sometimes-

"Father! Father look!" a familiar voice called as its owner darted through the garden towards us. I smiled down at the young boy. "What is it?" I asked, ruffling his lazy brown hair. He produced a small wooden carving of a dragon in his hand. I took it, admiring its funny snout. "It's very good! Has Aster been teaching you again?" I asked. He bobbed his head up and down excitedly, "Yupp!" he said as I handed the figurine to Jack. "Huh! Nice work, my Prince." He complimented, patting his knee. Jamie jumped into Jack's lap as he began to spout off the day's adventures. He had learned a new riding trick on his favorite horse and his tutor had scolded him for "losing" his penmanship journal.

He prattled on for a while longer before Isanna appeared around the corner. "Young Prince, it's time for your bath," She informed him. Jamie wrinkled up his nose, "Father, do I have to?" he asked, giving me puppy dog eyes (which I swore he'd learned from Jack). I pulled him from Jack's lap and stood him upright on the ground again. "Cleanliness is next to godliness. Now don't go giving Isanna a fit and make sure you stay in your bed once you're in it," I told him. He pouted, but reached up to hug me around my neck. "Good-night, Father. Good-night, High Knight Frost!" he said before scurrying off to Isanna's side.

Alone once again in the dim light of the evening, I leaned into Jack's side. He wrapped his arm around me, protecting me from the chilling air. "He's growing again," Jack said, his hand slipping into mine. "He is, isn't he?" I mused. Jack gave me a small peck on my

cheek. I turned to face him, "You've got a piece of straw stuck in your hair," I told him, reaching a hand up to pluck it out. I twisted my fingers into the soft white locks, playing with them. Jack raised an eyebrow, "Is it just really stuck in there?" he asked. I shook my head,

"Noâ€¦ I got that out a while ago."

Jack smiled down at me as he took my face in his hands, and kissed me gently...

-.---.--~Fin~-.---.--.-

*Cries for days*

Welp, that's it for his one... Yeah...

Thank you all so much for reading! Your reviews and PMs make me the happiest little marshmallow child you've ever seen. *Glomps you all*

*Sniffles*

But hey, the MeekyHijack raffle happened!

And the winners are...

*...Drumroll...*

In third place, Aquamarine Pisces!

In second place, Mochi Bounce!

And finally, in first place, Sillvog!

Congratulations! *applause and confetti*

Once again, the collab should be up soon as well as the prizes!

And hey,

Thanks again, you cute patoots :3 I'll see you soon.

End
file.